

COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME: HOW SPECIAL FORCES  
BUILD NATIONAL POLICE CAPACITY IN LATIN AMERICA

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME: HOW SPECIAL FORCES BUILD NATIONAL POLICE CAPACITY IN LATIN AMERICA, by Major Benjamin Wisnioski, 132 pages.

Transnational organized crime is the principal security threat in Latin America. Beginning in the 1980s, US Special Forces partnered with national police units in Latin America. Initial efforts focused on countering drug trafficking. Today, efforts focus on Transnational Organized Crime. US strategy and policy documents identify this threat, and identify security assistance as one part of US strategy going forward. Yet, the literature record for US Special Forces training national police units to confront the threat is minimal.

Thus this research focused on establishing a base for future research and identifying relationships useful to making future policy decisions. The primary research questions is: Why are some US Special Forces partnerships with Latin American national police units effective at countering transnational organized crime? This research encompasses three cases in which US Special Forces partnered with national police units to achieve this objective: Bolivia, Colombia, and Honduras. The cases examine the strategic environment, the units, and the independent and dependent variables. The research determines that the duration of the partnership and the degree of partner nation support are the two most important factors in developing national police units capable of targeting transnational criminal organizations.

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## ACRONYMS

BPC	Building Partner Capacity
CNP	Colombian National Police
CNT	Counter Narco-Terrorism
C-TOC	Counter Transnational Organized Crime
DEA	Drug Enforcement Administration
DIRAN	Direccion de Antinarcocticos (Antinarcoctics Directorate of Colombia)
DOD	Department of Defense
DOS	Department of State
DTO	Drug Trafficking Organization
FARC-EP	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia–Ejército del Pueblo
HVT	High Value Target
INL	Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement
INM	Bureau of International Narcotics Matters
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MTT	Mobile Training Team
NAS	Narcotics Affairs Section
POI	Program of Instruction
SF	Special Forces
SFG(A)	Special Forces Group (Airborne)
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SOC SOUTH	Special Operations Command South
SOUTHCOM	United States Southern Command

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

Significant transnational criminal organizations constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States, and I hereby declare a national emergency to deal with that threat... Criminal networks are not only expanding their operations, but they are also diversifying their activities, resulting in a convergence of transnational threats that has evolved to become more complex, volatile, and destabilizing.

— President Barack Obama, *Executive Order 13581*

Transnational organized crime is a unique threat to regional stability and security in Latin America. The US government defines transnational organized crime as,

Those self-perpetuating associations of individuals who operate transnationally for the purpose of obtaining power, influence, monetary and/or commercial gains, wholly or in part by illegal means, while protecting their activities through a pattern of corruption and/or violence, or while protecting their illegal activities through a transnational organizational structure and the exploitation of transnational commerce or communication mechanisms.<sup>1</sup>

The flexibility and resources of transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) outpace and undermine the responses of countries in the region, exploiting organizational and legal gaps in US law and government organizations. Today, TCOs are businesses within illegal markets, with the simple goal of maximizing profits.<sup>2</sup> The US has a defined strategy to combat TCOs, and part of that strategy is to work with partner nations to build security

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<sup>1</sup> National Security Council, “Strategy To Combat Transnational Organized Crime: Addressing Converging Threats to National Security,” 25 July 2011, iii, accessed 20 August 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/nsc/transnational-crime>.

<sup>2</sup> Cynthia J. Arnson and Eric L. Olson, eds., *Organized Crime in Central America: The Northern Triangle* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Reports on Latin America, November 2011), 38, accessed 5 February 2014, [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/LAP\\_single\\_page.pdf](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/LAP_single_page.pdf).

force capacity in order to dismantle criminal networks. This study will analyze US Special Forces (SF) participation in this strategy. It will focus on partnerships with National Police units in Bolivia, Colombia, and Honduras as part of US efforts to counter transnational crime in Latin America. It examines how US Special Forces support Department of State and Drug Enforcement Administration efforts, and makes corresponding policy recommendations.

This chapter will describe the criminal threat, review US strategy, and explain US Special Forces role in security assistance. It will then explain the what, how, and why of this research. Chapter 2 will examine what has been written about TOC and Special Forces training police. Chapter 3 will describe the research design used to conduct this study and its strengths and weaknesses. Chapter 4 examines three different security assistance programs in which Special Forces supported other US agencies in building national police capacity. Chapter 5 will make conclusions and recommendations off of the case analysis conducted in chapter 4.

### Illicit Markets and Criminal Economic Impact

Illicit markets are the driving force behind organized crime. Demand for illegal goods, from cocaine to oil, creates business opportunities. In Latin America, illegal drugs remain the dominant source of illegal revenue,<sup>3</sup> and the principal driver of violent crime and corruption. In 2010, the UN valued cocaine traffic to North America and Europe at

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<sup>3</sup> The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, “The Globalization of Crime: A Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment,” 2010, 276, accessed 15 February 2014, [https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/tocta/TOCTA\\_Report\\_2010\\_low\\_res.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/tocta/TOCTA_Report_2010_low_res.pdf).

72 billion dollars.<sup>4</sup> Criminals leverage their revenue to exploit the region's high inequality, small economies, and weak institutions. They have diversified their enterprises, expanding into new legal and illegal markets. In the state of Michoacán Mexico, criminals seized lemon and avocado farms, forcing out competitors. Avocado farming in Michoacán is a billion dollar enterprise.<sup>5</sup> The same group seized control of the region's iron ore industry, levying illegal taxes and controlling production.<sup>6</sup> The same group progressed to taxing all business activity in the state.<sup>7</sup> TCOs, Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs) and gangs use violence to manage their business, which has spilled over into civil society, creating a citizen security crisis in Latin America.

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<sup>4</sup> The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "The Globalization of Crime: A Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment," 275.

<sup>5</sup> Pablo Vázquez Camacho, "Citizens' Pain—Self-Defence Groups Face Up To Mexican Gangs," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 10 September 2013, 7, accessed 16 February 2014, <https://janes.ihs.com/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?DocType=News&ItemId=+++1585742&Pubabbrev=JIR>.

<sup>6</sup> Dave Graham, "Chinese Iron Trade Fuels Port Clash With Mexican Drug Cartel," *Reuters*, 1 January 2014, accessed 16 February 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/01/01/us-mexico-drugs-port-idUSBREA000EG20140101>.

<sup>7</sup> José De Córdoba, "Mexico Reaches Pact With Vigilante Groups; Self-Defense Groups in Michoacán State Agree to Join Rural, Town Police as Security Forces Capture a Top Cartel Leader," *The Wall Street Journal Online*, 27 January 2014, accessed 16 February 2014, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304007504579347170924367970>.

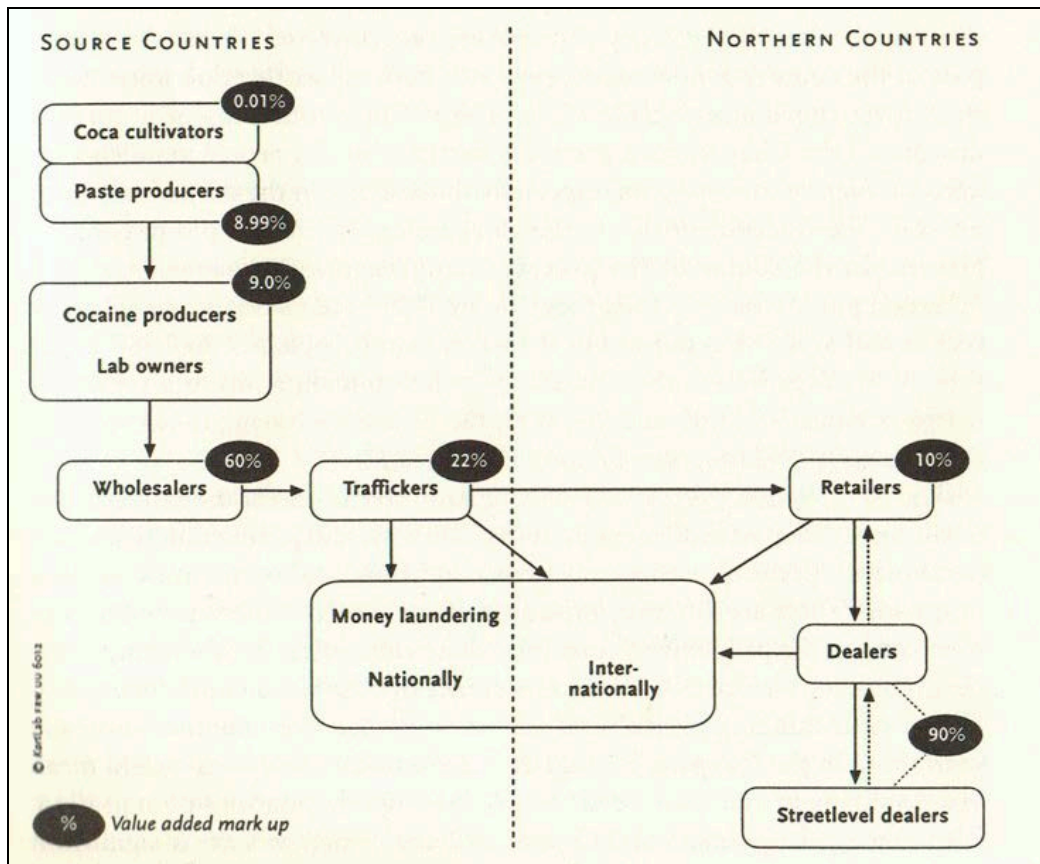


Figure 1. The Cocaine Commodity Chain

Source: Menno Vellinga, *The Political Economy of the Drug Industry: Latin America and the International System* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 7.

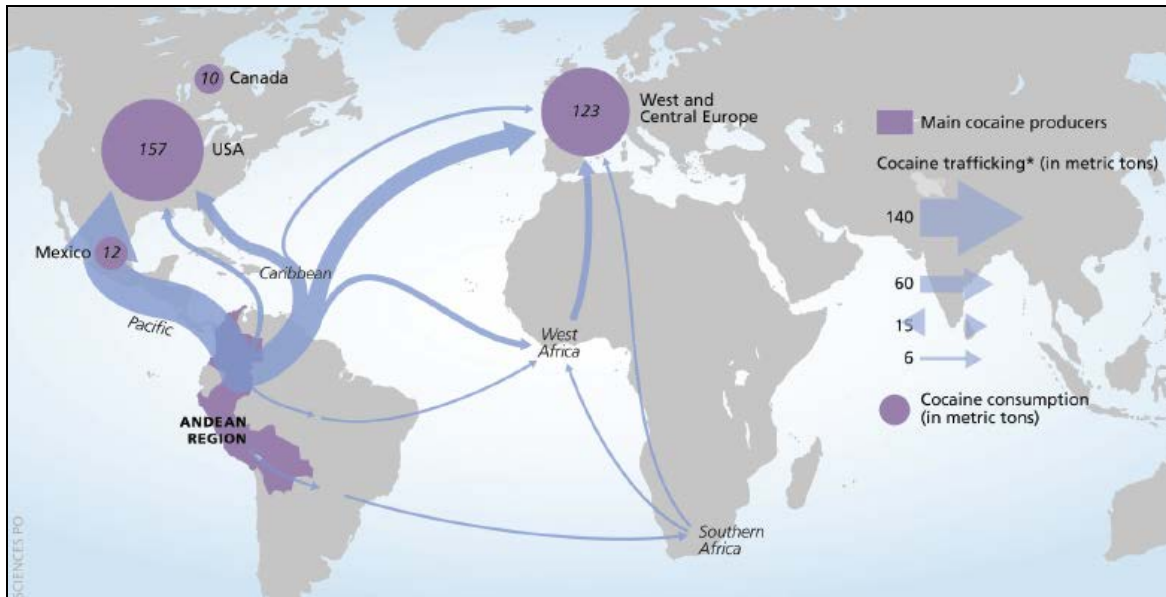


Figure 2. Principal Global Cocaine Flows, 2009

*Source:* Thibault Le Pichon, Thomas Pietschmann, and Ted Leggett, “The Transatlantic Cocaine Market,” United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, April 2011, 17, accessed 20 February 2014, [http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/Transatlantic\\_cocaine\\_market.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/Transatlantic_cocaine_market.pdf).

### Impact on Citizen Security

Violence in the form of murder, political assassination, intimidation, rape, and kidnapping are byproducts of transnational organized crime in Latin America. In Central America, murder rates in drug trafficking areas were 111 percent higher than non-trafficking areas.<sup>8</sup> The state of Guerrero Mexico is a recent example of this. In 2013, Guerrero led Mexico with the highest homicide rate, 73.2 homicides per 100,000, and was home to the second most dangerous city in the world, Acapulco, with 142.88 per

<sup>8</sup> Rodrigo Serrano-Berthet and Humberto Lopez, “Crime and Violence in Central America” (Report, World Bank, 2010), 43, accessed 14 October 2013, [http://issuu.com/world.bank.publications/docs/crime\\_and\\_violence\\_in\\_central\\_america\\_n](http://issuu.com/world.bank.publications/docs/crime_and_violence_in_central_america_n).

100,000.<sup>9</sup> In 2013, Brazilian cities comprised 15 of the 50 most violent cities in the world, as measured by homicides.<sup>10</sup> Homicides have increased 132 percent over the last 30 years from 11.5 per 100,000 to 27 per 100,000.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Venezuela recorded 21,692 murders, or 73 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2012. Caracas recorded 122 per 100,000.<sup>12</sup> Across the region, transnational organized crime, gangs, and ineffective institutions combine to create high levels of violence and insecurity.

### US Policy Context

US strategy, policy, and law govern how the US works with its partners to confront these challenges. The US C-TOC strategy in Latin America has steadily evolved out of existing counterdrug and security cooperation policies. The 2011 Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime has five objectives:

1. Protect Americans and our partners from the harm, violence, and exploitation of transnational criminal networks.
2. Help partner countries strengthen governance and transparency, break the corruptive power of transnational criminal networks, and sever state-crime alliances.

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<sup>9</sup> Pamela Engel, Christina Sterbenz, and Gus Lubin, “The 50 Most Violent Cities In The World,” *Business Insider*, 27 November 2013, accessed 15 March 2014, <http://www.businessinsider.com/the-most-violent-cities-in-the-world-2013-11>; Janes, “Self-Defence Group’s Refusal to Disarm Increase Risk of Conflict With Military in Mexico’s Guerrero,” *IHS Jane’s Country Risk Daily Report*, 29 January 2014, accessed 5 March 2014, <https://janes.ihs.com/>.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Miriam Wells, “Report Maps Three Decades Of Violence In Brazil,” *InSight Crime*, 12 August 2013, accessed 13 January 2014, <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-analysis/report-maps-three-decades-of-murders-in-brazil>.

<sup>12</sup> Mark P. Sullivan, *Venezuelan Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 16 September 2013), 15, accessed 18 February 2014, <http://www.proquest.com>.

3. Break the economic power of transnational criminal networks and protect strategic markets and the U.S. financial system from TOC penetration and abuse.
4. Defeat transnational criminal networks that pose the greatest threat to national security by targeting their infrastructures, depriving them of their enabling means, and preventing the criminal facilitation of terrorist activities.
5. Build international consensus, multilateral cooperation, and public-private partnerships to defeat transnational organized crime.<sup>13</sup>

This research focuses on working with interagency and national police partners to accomplish objective number four: defeating networks.<sup>14</sup> US C-TOC objectives overlap with the five US counter drug objectives: supply reduction, interdiction, dismantling of trafficking organizations, overseas demand reduction, and international agreements.<sup>15</sup>

This research examines the dismantling of trafficking organizations and networks.

In Latin America, the US works through four main initiatives to accomplish these objectives: the Mérida Initiative and Strategy, the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI), the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), and the U.S.-Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI).<sup>16</sup> Each provides a security cooperation framework for security assistance and operations. US law plays an important role in who and how the US provides security assistance to our Latin American partners.

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<sup>13</sup> National Security Council, “Strategy To Combat Transnational Organized Crime: Addressing Converging Threats to National Security,” 1.

<sup>14</sup> Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Counternarcotics and Global Threats Strategy* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 27 April 2011), 13, accessed 20 August 2014, <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=721746>.

<sup>15</sup> Liana Sun Wyler, *International Drug Control Policy: Background and U.S. Responses* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 13 August 2013), 4, accessed 18 February 2014, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

## Security Assistance

US security assistance law identifies and directs the coordination of US foreign policy through the division and regulation of funding and authorities. It is important to the context of this research because it governs how Special Forces train foreign police as part of an interagency team. The 1961 Foreign Assistance Act (FAA), 22 U.S.C. 2420 regulates security assistance.<sup>17</sup> It assigns the Department of State (DOS) to manage security assistance programs. Under section 660, the FAA originally prohibited US military assistance to international police forces. However, Congress later amended 660 to enable military training of counternarcotic police. The US uses a host of different programs to build partner capacity in foreign security forces: Foreign Military Sales (FMS), Foreign Military Financing (FMF), Excess Defense Articles (EDA), International Military Education Training (IMET), Section 1206, and Section 1004. Section 1206 authority permits DOD to provide counterterrorism train and equip support. The process is administered by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency and jointly reviewed by DOD and DOS.<sup>18</sup> Section 1004 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) authority permits DOD to support counterdrug agencies with training and “other support to improve foreign counter narcotics capabilities at the request of any U.S. federal

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<sup>17</sup> Nina M. Serafino, *The Department of Defense Role in Foreign Assistance: Background, Major Issues, and Options for Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 9 December 2008), 10, accessed 20 October 2014, <http://www.proquest.com>.

<sup>18</sup> Nina M. Serafino, *Security Assistance Reform: ‘Section 1206’ Background and Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 8 December 2014), 2, accessed 20 February 2015, <http://www.proquest.com>.

department or agency, or of any U.S. state, local, or foreign law enforcement agency.”<sup>19</sup>

Providing security assistance is an interagency process which requires constant Congressional oversight. These laws have evolved over the timeframe this study covers, which impacted how US SF supported national police programs.

Within the context of these laws, each interagency stakeholder has a separate set of ends, ways, and means which further impact who and how security assistance is provided. The US agencies involved in providing foreign police assistance are the State Department’s Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), the DEA, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). INL is the lead agency for building foreign police partner capacity. However, INL cannot provide lethal assistance nor plan and execute missions. INL can only purchase lethal aid in Colombia and Afghanistan. Instead it focuses on institution building through training and equipping police. The DEA, DHS, FBI and other federal law enforcement agencies can train and advise foreign police in the investigation and arrest of criminals. They can provide intelligence and conduct operations with the police that INL trains and equips. The DEA, DHS, and FBI have training teams whose mission it is to train foreign police. INL acts as a resource manager working with other agencies, including DOD, and private contractors to deliver training. DOD for its part, contributes its financial, logistical, intelligence, and training capabilities. DOD Title 10 ammunition, explosives, medical supplies, and other training funds combined with trainers enable partner nation security forces to shoot and train more in one course than they would in subsequent years of unilateral training.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 12.

## Special Operations Forces

US Special Operations Forces are one component of the US interagency approach to the above-discussed components of the US C-TOC strategy.<sup>20</sup> Comprised of specially selected, trained, and organized men and women, they have a history of working in the region with the partner militaries and police in support of counterinsurgency, counterdrug, counterterrorism, and security cooperation activities. The main elements included within the term Special Operations Forces are Army Special Forces, Navy Sea Air Land (SEALs) teams, Marine Special Operations teams, Army Civil Affairs Teams, and Army Military Information-Support Operations (MISO) teams. Special Operations Command South, the theater special operations command that supports US Southern Command, coordinates and commands these elements. SOF units have unique capabilities that enable them to build partner capacity and support interagency counter transnational organized crime efforts. SOF offer an enduring presence, a small professional footprint, and special language and culture skills.

US Army Special Forces specifically, are experts at Foreign Internal Defense (FID) and the indirect approach.<sup>21</sup> They are regionally aligned, and the 7th Special Forces

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<sup>20</sup> Special Operations Forces are “those Active and Reserve Component [Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force] forces designated by the Secretary of Defense that are specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct and support special operations.” Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 8 November 2010), 245.

<sup>21</sup> US Army Special Forces are “US Army forces organized, trained, and equipped to conduct special operations with an emphasis on unconventional warfare capabilities.” Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, 325; FID is the “participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from

Group (Airborne) (7th SFG(A)) is aligned with Latin America. It has a long history of conducting FID in Latin America beginning in the 1960s and continuing to today. Security assistance is one line of effort within FID operations. 7th SFG(A) typically employs a 12-man element called an Operational Detachment-Alpha (ODA) to train, advise, and assist Latin American military and police units. Each team is capable of working with 500-man battalion-sized elements. They provide DOD and the interagency community with a persistent engagement capability that can develop human capital and institutions through training, advising, and assisting partner nation forces.

In the next chapter the literature review will highlight differences of opinions regarding the training of police. Due to perceptions of past FID efforts in Latin America, the influence of popular culture, and the sometimes secret nature of SF operations, SF can generate suspicion or even conjure negative images from other US agencies, human rights organizations, or other governments in the region. Correct or incorrect, these perceptions exist, and thus are a consideration in the decision to use SF on roles such as training police.

### Problem Statement

As discussed, Transnational Organized Crime is the principal security issue in Latin America today and also poses a threat to US national security. TOC is an internal and external security challenge for countries in the region. TCOs span international boundaries, corrupt and erode governments, leverage domestic laws, and operate in networks making them difficult to target. In Latin America, underdeveloped institutions, subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism, and other threats to its security.” Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, 145.

fragile governments, and poor human rights records create additional challenges. C-TOC requires flexible policy applied through a whole-of-government approach. In most cases Latin American militaries are responsible for the external security mission but not the internal one. Ministries of Interior (MOI) or Ministries of Security (MOS) are responsible for internal security with national police forces. However, well-armed and well-financed TCO, DTO, and gang pose serious security threats to community and national police, who are often under-trained, equipped, and paid. In the past, US SF have trained and advised national police special operations units to defeat criminal networks and succeeded. Thus, this research will focus on SF partnerships with national police units whose mission it is to dismantle transnational criminal organizations, and why they were or were not effective.

#### Primary Research Question

Why are some US SF partnerships with Latin American national police units effective at countering transnational organized crime?

#### Secondary Research Questions

1. What are US objectives in partnering with national police units?
2. Under what conditions do SF partner with national police units?
3. How do SF improve national police capacity to defeat criminal networks?

#### Research Assumptions

1. TOC and countering it in Latin America are complex problems that require integrated whole-of-government long-term solutions. In countries combating this threat, criminals share codependent relationships with governments. The interdependence of

society, weak governance, inequality, US drug demand, history, corruption, the balloon and cockroach effects, and rapid organizational evolution add significant friction to all policy solutions in the region.<sup>22</sup>

2. Sufficient partner nation, criminal, and US unclassified data is not available to make an effective quantitative analysis of this question.

3. This paper will not solve the problem as a whole. This research topic will only examine one component of existing transnational organized crime and security policy. Thus, the research will assume the other components of the strategy will remain unchanged.

4. The US, Brazil, and Europe (the three major markets for cocaine, crack and heroin from Latin America) will not legalize cocaine, crack, or heroin. Demand for illegal drugs will remain strong making the trafficking of those drugs extremely profitable. TCOs will adjust their business strategies and networks to market demand, expanding into other businesses to include extortion, illegal logging, mining, and human trafficking.

5. Transnational organized crime and citizen security will remain the region's principle security issues.

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<sup>22</sup> Juan Carlos Garzón, Marianna Olinger Daniel M. Rico, and Gema Santamaría, "The Criminal Diaspora: The Spread of Transnational Organized Crime and How to Contain its Expansion," Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, July 2013, 12, accessed 15 October 2014, [www.wilsoncenter.org/lap](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/lap). "The 'balloon' effect, where production simply moves from one place to another when pressure is applied. The 'cockroach' effect occurs when, in order to avoid detection after having the light shone on them, criminal groups move from one municipality to another, and from one country to another, in search of safer places and weaker government capacity."

## Definitions

Attack the network operations: Lethal and nonlethal actions and operations against networks conducted continuously and simultaneously at multiple levels (tactical, operational, and strategic) that capitalize on or create key vulnerabilities and disrupt activities to eliminate the enemy's ability to function in order to enable success of the operation or campaign. Also called AtN operations.<sup>23</sup>

Countering Transnational Organized Crime: A multidimensional strategy that safeguards citizens, breaks the financial strength of criminal and terrorist networks, disrupts illicit trafficking networks, defeats transnational criminal organizations, fights government corruption, strengthens the rule of law, bolsters judicial systems, and improves transparency.<sup>24</sup>

Security Assistance: Group of programs authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended, or other related statutes by which the United States provides defense articles, military training, and other defense-related services by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales in furtherance of national policies and objectives. Security assistance is an element of security cooperation funded and authorized by Department of State to be administered by Department of Defense/Defense Security Cooperation Agency.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, JP 1-02, 21.

<sup>24</sup> Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2010), 49, accessed 2 October 2014, [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss\\_viewer/national\\_security\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, 325.

Special Operations: Operations requiring unique modes of employment, tactical techniques, equipment and training often conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and characterized by one or more of the following: time sensitive, clandestine, low visibility, conducted with and/or through indigenous forces, requiring regional expertise, and/or a high degree of risk. Also called SO.<sup>26</sup>

Transnational Organized Crime: Those self-perpetuating associations of individuals who operate transnationally for the purpose of obtaining power, influence, monetary and/or commercial gains, wholly or in part by illegal means, while protecting their activities through a pattern of corruption and/or violence, or while protecting their illegal activities through a transnational organizational structure and the exploitation of transnational commerce or communication mechanisms.<sup>27</sup>

### Scope

This study will focus on US SF Building Partner Capacity (BPC) in countering transnational organized crime. Research will focus geographically on Latin America and its unique challenges from the Mexico's southern border south, including the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. Research will cover US Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), Special Operations Command South (SOCSOUTH), and Special Operations Command (SOCOM). It will examine partner nation Ministry of the Interior (MOI) special operations units and their higher headquarters.

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<sup>26</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, 245.

<sup>27</sup> National Security Council, iii.

### Limitations

The lack of availability of partner nation, criminal, and classified US data will limit the study. A large amount of US training and advising data, which applies to partner nation units, remains classified. Various aspects of special operations targeting, intelligence activities, budgets, and operational outcomes also remain classified. This research will not address the criminal perspective due to a lack of available information. The Bolivian case is pre-Internet and as a result, less available reporting exists. The greatest limitation is CGSC's prohibition of historical and subject matter expert interviews. Interviews would have provided the research greater detail and perspective. As a result, much of the research will depend on primary and secondary sources.

### Delimitations

Research focuses between 1986 and today. This period includes the US counter drug program in Bolivia, Plan Colombia, the evolution of TCOs, and the rise of challenges in the Northern Triangle of Central America. Research will focus solely on open source and unclassified information. It only examines US Special Forces and their partnerships with national police units. Research is limited to US SF because there are no other cases in which other US SOF forces conducted sustained training programs with national police units. MARSOC did not exist until 2006, and the SEALs worked exclusively with military units. The research will focus on C-TOC training and operations in the US Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR). This enables me to only look at Special Operations Command South (SOC SOUTH) instead of including US Northern Command (NORTHCOM) and Special Operations Command North (SOC NORTH). It will not cover US conventional forces or other US

capacity building efforts. Moreover, the research will examine partner nation MOI SOF units.

### Significance of the Study

Transnational organized crime is a major security issue in Latin America and around the world. As discussed above, TOC destabilizes states, and is the major security issue within Latin America today. Criminals outpace policy responses, exploiting organizational and geographic seams. In a recent Joint Staff study, Major General Michael Nagata framed the problem, explaining, “Criminals will be the first to exploit the vulnerabilities and opportunities that arise from a rapidly changing world. Governments, like our own, will be challenged to keep pace with, much less stay ahead of, such actors and their networks, though try we must.”<sup>28</sup>

Therefore this study examines an approach to one aspect of the current C-TOC strategy. Further, population growth projections, migration patterns, and the rise of megacities in the region as described in Global Trends 2030 indicate TOC will continue to flourish in the decades to come. Consequently, continued analysis is needed to provide policy makers additional understanding to better tailor responses.

This study provides greater historical context for the future use of Special Forces to train special police units to target criminal organizations and their networks. The

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<sup>28</sup> Ben Riley and Kathleen Kiernan, eds., “The ‘New’ Face of Transnational Crime Organizations (TCOs): A Geopolitical Perspective and Implications To US National Security,” Calhoun Institutional Archive of the Naval Postgraduate School, March 2013, 4, accessed 6 September 2014, [http://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/30346/U\\_TCO%20White%20Paper%20March%202013%20Approved%20for%20Public%20Release%20R.pdf?sequence=1](http://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/30346/U_TCO%20White%20Paper%20March%202013%20Approved%20for%20Public%20Release%20R.pdf?sequence=1).

following chapter will examine the state of the existing literature. While the US has trained police in the past, not much has been written about it. In this context, the study hopes to also fill an institutional knowledge gap that exists within the Special Operations Community.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

This literature review covers national strategy, TOC studies, and the use of military forces to train police. The purpose is to identify existing literature relevant to the subject, gaps in that literature, and the main perspectives relevant to the discussion. The research question investigated in this thesis encompasses several bodies of research, but lacks analysis within the specific area of research.

US strategy identifies Transnational Organized Crime as a major threat, and identifies security cooperation and whole-of-government approaches as the long-term strategy to counter it. Much has been written about transnational organized crime in Latin America. Papers examine the political economy of TOC activity and its impact on the economic, political, and social systems. They measure drug flows, violent crime, and corruption, examining in detail the challenges of TOC. Comparatively little has been written recently about SOF training police, or the development of national level police paramilitary units. The majority of works focus on conventional military units training community-level police units. Within these bodies of research, this study contributes to the analysis of the use of SOF to train national-level police units. Specifically, the study will examine the different factors that impacted past US SF efforts to build the capacity of national police special units.

## Section 1: US Strategic Documents

As discussed in chapter 1, the US Government regards transnational organized crime as a top threat. TOC is identified in the NSS, NMS, the 2014 “Quadrennial Defense Review,” the President’s “Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime,” and other strategic documents. These documents describe the US Government’s view of the threat and security cooperation responses.

In the 2010 *National Security Strategy* (NSS), President Obama and his National Security Staff explain their perception of the major challenges the US faces and the strategy to guide US efforts in the world across all elements of national power. The document discusses the threat of TOC, the crime-terror nexus, and the need to leverage partners through security cooperation and capacity building, while promoting human rights and democracy. The President explains the US “will undertake long-term, sustained efforts to strengthen the capacity of security forces to guarantee internal security, defend against external threats, and promote regional security and respect for human rights and the rule of law.”<sup>29</sup> He identifies “the crime-terror nexus is a serious concern,” and that “combating transnational criminal and trafficking networks requires a multidimensional strategy that safeguards citizens, breaks the financial strength of criminal and terrorist networks, disrupts illicit trafficking networks, [and] defeats transnational criminal organizations.”<sup>30</sup> The document serves as the basis for the following documents and all US C-TOC strategy.

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<sup>29</sup> Obama, 27.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 49.

In the 2011 *National Military Strategy of The United States of America 2011: Redefining America's Military Leadership* (NMS), the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and his staff explain their view of the same challenges outlined in the NSS and outline the military's strategy for addressing them. The document identifies TOC and briefly discusses security cooperation efforts in Latin America to improve hemispheric security. The document identifies the military's need to reform the security assistance in order to improve the flexibility and effectiveness of US security assistance processes. The military wants to develop "a pooled-resources approach to facilitate more complementary efforts across departments and programs, integrating defense, diplomacy, development, law enforcement, and intelligence capacity-building activities, across departments and programs, integrating defense, diplomacy, development, law enforcement, and intelligence capacity-building activities."<sup>31</sup>

In the 2014 *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014* (QDR), the Secretary of Defense outlines the Department of Defense's strategy for the next four years. In line with the NSS and NMS, the QDR establishes security cooperation, human rights, and transparency as key to US military strategy.<sup>32</sup> In the Western Hemisphere, DOD will support civilian governments and civilian control of the military, and will work towards

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<sup>31</sup> Michael Mullen, *National Military Strategy of The United States of America 2011: Redefining America's Military Leadership* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 8 February 2011), 15, accessed 10 October 2014, <http://www.defense.gov/pubs/2011-National-Military-Strategy.pdf>.

<sup>32</sup> Charles T. Hagel, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 4 March 2014), v, accessed 10 October 2014, [http://www.defense.gov/pubs/2014\\_Quadrennial\\_Defense\\_Review.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/pubs/2014_Quadrennial_Defense_Review.pdf).

multilateral solutions through established regional defense organizations.<sup>33</sup> DOD will leverage interagency partners to support whole-of-government approaches to TOC and drug trafficking.<sup>34</sup>

In the “Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime,” the President and the National Security Staff provide the clearest statement of the challenges TOC poses, and the US strategy to combat them. As in the NSS and NMS, the strategy employs all elements of national power to counter the threat.<sup>35</sup> The strategy describes attacking the “networks that pose the greatest threat to national security by targeting their infrastructures, depriving them of their enabling means, and preventing the criminal facilitation of terrorist activities.”<sup>36</sup> While highlighting the threat to stability in Central America, it reviews US and Colombian successes in Colombia, and the need to reproduce them in other regions.<sup>37</sup> It explains that the US “will work with [its] international partners to build their law enforcement capacities [and] strengthen their judicial institutions.”<sup>38</sup> The US “will continue ongoing efforts to identify and disrupt the leadership, production, intelligence gathering, transportation, and financial infrastructure of major TOC

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<sup>33</sup> Hagel, 18.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>35</sup> “Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime: Addressing Converging Threats to National Security,” 25 July 2011, v.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 15.

networks.”<sup>39</sup> It will further “leverage assets to enhance foreign capabilities, including counterterrorism capacity building, foreign law enforcement cooperation, military cooperation, and the strengthening of justice and interior ministries.”<sup>40</sup> The document further details the DEA’s role in and the laws that it uses to help partner nations dismantle TCO networks.

In the “Western Hemisphere Defense Policy Statement,” the Secretary of Defense explains DOD policy efforts in the region. The document covers many of the issues described in the NSS, NMS, and C-TOC strategies, and explains the regional consensus that TOC poses the greatest regional security threat. He writes DOD will use economy of force through interagency leveraging of partner nation capabilities to improve security.<sup>41</sup> He supports Colombian efforts to improve Central American security capacity, and explains the importance of collaborating with states through security initiatives such as CARSI and CBSI.<sup>42</sup> The document explains US support to partner nations that use their militaries internally to counter drug trafficking and TOC. The DOD views this assistance as a temporary effort to fill a civilian security capacity gap while at the same time acknowledging the capability gap that the militaries themselves face in confronting internal security threats. The DOD does not see this as a long-term solution, but also

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<sup>39</sup> “Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime: Addressing Converging Threats to National Security,” 25 July 2011, 24.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>41</sup> Leon Panetta, *Western Hemisphere Defense Policy Statement* (Washington, DC: US Department of Defense, October 2012), forward, accessed 15 October 2014, <http://www.defense.gov/news/WHDPSP-English.pdf>.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

respects the decisions of other countries to do so.<sup>43</sup> Further, “Although DOD primarily cooperates with foreign countries’ military forces, it also will continue to work, upon request, with law enforcement and other security services to counter transnational threats.”<sup>44</sup> Meanwhile, the US will continue to apply “counterterrorism tools and capabilities appropriately.”<sup>45</sup>

## Section 2: Transnational Organized Crime Policy Papers

The majority of the think tank papers addressing TOC or aspects of it such as human or weapons trafficking examine the impact of the issue. They use statistics to explain the damage done to the economies and societies and the political and policy challenges that exist. They highlight citizen insecurity and governance failures. However, they do not provide fully developed recommendations as to what should be done or how. This body of literature is important for understanding the complexity of the issue, analyzing the individual cases, and understanding the effects of policies. The studies illustrate the impact of the balloon effect, the cockroach effect, private security markets, and the challenges posed by corruption.

In *The Globalization of Crime: A Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment*, The United Nations Office On Drugs and Crime (UNODC) provides the best and most comprehensive transnational organized crime data. The report divides the world into regions, addressing organized crime within each region. Data from this report is cited

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<sup>43</sup> Panetta, 4.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 8.

in most related think tank reports. It concludes that illicit markets are the driving force behind transnational organized crime, and therefore as discussed in chapter 1, solutions need to be equally multifaceted.<sup>46</sup>

In “One Goal, Two Struggles: Confronting Crime and Violence in Mexico and Colombia,” Cynthia Arnson, Eric Olson, and Christine Zaino compile works that compare and contrast organized crime and state responses in Colombia and Mexico.<sup>47</sup> They examine the threat and analyze Colombian best practices that might apply in Mexico. Where the UNODC report captures the data and defines the problem, this report looks at both the problem and solutions used in Colombia to solve it. It provides country specific information for Colombia and highlights the current policy trend of applying Plan Colombia’s lessons learned regionally. The papers support US capacity building efforts with the Colombian and Mexican military and police.

In “The Criminal Diaspora: The Spread of Transnational Organized Crime and How to Contain its Expansion,” Juan Carlos Garzón Vergara examines the impact of national strategies to counter transnational organized crime. Garzón corroborates the belief that transnational organized crime is the region’s greatest security challenge.<sup>48</sup> He describes how criminal networks spread and link with other networks, and how to attempt

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<sup>46</sup> “The Globalization of Crime: A Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment,” 276.

<sup>47</sup> María Victoria Llorente, Jeremy McDermott, Raúl Benítez Manaut, Marta Lucía Ramírez de Rincón, and John Bailey, “One Goal, Two Struggles: Confronting Crime and Violence in Mexico and Colombia,” Woodrow Wilson Center Reports On The Americas, 2014, viii, accessed 9 September 2014, [www.wilsoncenter.org/latin-american-program](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/latin-american-program).

<sup>48</sup> Garzón, 1.

to contain them.<sup>49</sup> Garzón advocates for an all included policy based around greater international cooperation in the region including intelligence sharing and joint operations.

In “Game Changers: Tracking the Evolution of Organized Crime in the Americas 2013,” *InSight Crime* authors recount the current state of transnational organized crime across the region. They provide detailed analysis of the self-defense groups in Mexico, the gang truces in El Salvador and Colombia, the rise of Latin American drug consumption, the rise of Peru as the number one cocaine exporter, and the destabilization of Honduras.<sup>50</sup> The work presents current C-TOC trends and effects filling gaps that the older papers left. It further analyzes recent Central America gang truce efforts.

In “Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Foreign Policy Issues for Congress,” John Rollins and Liana Sun Wyler examine the nexus of organized crime and terrorism and the government’s response to them.<sup>51</sup> The report first explains the perceived threat, and then actual cases such as the FARC-EP and the Zetas. It identifies terror-financing links as a primary explanation for a nexus. It provides a diplomatic, intelligence, military, and economic analysis of the US response and identifies several issues for Congress to consider. The report provides greater detail on US laws and programs, while highlighting a seam exploited by terrorists and criminals.

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<sup>49</sup> Garzón, 2.

<sup>50</sup> “Game Changers: Tracking the Evolution of Organized Crime in the Americas 2013,” *InSight Crime*, 1, accessed 20 March 2014, <http://www.insightcrime.org/gamechangers/InsightCrimeGameChangers2013.pdf>.

<sup>51</sup> John Rollins and Liana Sun Wyler, *Terrorism and Transnational Crime: Foreign Policy Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 11 June 2013), 1. accessed 15 April 2014, <http://www.proquest.com>.

### Section 3: Military Training Police

Few works describe Special Operations Forces training police units. The US has trained foreign police for a very long time, with mixed results. Some efforts in Latin America during the Cold War resulted in human rights violations. Consequently, using military forces to train police is a sensitive issue within human rights organizations. However, both those authors in favor and those opposed agree that US law, specifically Section 660 of the 1961 FAA, 22 U.S.C. 2420 is dysfunctional, and that the US is not adequately organized or empowered to develop partner nation police forces effectively. Some authors suggest any military training of the police is dangerous no matter how well intentioned while others advocate for SOF training of certain police elements to increase specific capacities. These authors use the US experience in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, and Colombia over the last decade as a model, highlighting similarities between SOF and paramilitary police units. This section helps answer all of the research questions.

In “The Department of Defense Role in Foreign Assistance: Background, Major Issues, and Options for Congress,” Nina Serafino outlines the US Department of Defense’s roles and responsibilities in security cooperation and capacity building. This report acts as both a base of research with respect to the legal and political history of US foreign assistance, and a source for current perspectives on the issue. It examines DOD efforts to expand authorities to build security capacity in military forces and “other” security forces.<sup>52</sup> Following September 11<sup>th</sup>, DOD sought to “increase flexibility” in working with international security partners. It further explains SOF’s authorities to train

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<sup>52</sup> Serafino, *The Department of Defense Role in Foreign Assistance*, 14.

foreign law enforcement.<sup>53</sup> Providing a DOD perspective on stability operations and capacity building, Serafino writes, “for many years, DOD and U.S. military leaders rejected a nation-building role, arguing that it was not appropriate for U.S. military forces and detracted from combat readiness.”<sup>54</sup> However, DOD has since realized the need to build partner capacity as a strategy to better counter terrorism and TOC.

In *Convergence: Special Operations Forces and Civilian Law Enforcement*, John B. Alexander compares Special Operations Forces and US Civilian Law Enforcement personnel, highlighting increasingly similar missions and skills. Alexander believes SOF should acquire civilian police skills to build partner nation police capacity and improve SOF evidence and intelligence collection capabilities.<sup>55</sup> He foresees greater convergence, and examines transnational gangs as a threat and the need for increased domestic SOF-police collaboration. He explains, “the bottom line for both SOF and LEAs [Law Enforcement Agencies] is that the characteristics of man hunting are basically the same. Work in small, well-coordinated teams with the best intelligence possible about the target.”<sup>56</sup> Yet, he does not examine the use of SOF to train foreign police in the same role. His monograph principally focuses on the similarities and the potential need for support in the US.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>55</sup> John B. Alexander, *Convergence: Special Operations Forces and Civilian Law Enforcement* (Tampa, FL: Joint Special Operations University, July 2010), ix.

<sup>56</sup> Alexander, 1.

In *Persistent Engagement in Colombia*, Mark Moyer, Hector Pagan, and Wil R. Griego examine US SOF success building capacity in Colombia, and the need for the US to leverage a global SOF network.<sup>57</sup> The work advocates for US SOF to “train, educate, and support foreign police forces, particularly police forces with paramilitary capabilities.”<sup>58</sup> They believe the Departments of State and Justice lack the personnel to support efforts of the same scale and that police provide invaluable capabilities, which a military may lack or cannot provide by law.<sup>59</sup>

In, *US Military Forces and Police Assistance in Stability Operations: The Least-Worst Option to Fill the US Capacity Gap*, Dennis E. Keller examines the need for the US to develop a stability police force that can meet US Government needs in stability operations within the context of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Bosnia. He quotes *Field Manual (FM) 3-07, Stability Operations*, saying, “during the transformation, military forces may have to train and advise host-nation police forces” and “establish police academies” as essential stability tasks.”<sup>60</sup> Keller’s primary focus is developing community police and emphasizes the need for trainers to remain for extended periods of time.<sup>61</sup> Keller

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<sup>57</sup> Mark Moyer, Hector Pagan, and Wil R. Griego, *Persistent Engagement in Colombia* (Tampa, FL: Joint Special Operations University, July 2014), x, accessed 10 August 2014, [http://jsou.socom.mil/PubsPages/JSOU14-3\\_MoyarPaganGriego\\_Colombia\\_FINAL.pdf](http://jsou.socom.mil/PubsPages/JSOU14-3_MoyarPaganGriego_Colombia_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Dennis E. Keller, *US Military Forces And Police Assistance In Stability Operations: The Least-Worst Option To Fill The US Capacity Gap* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2010), 2, accessed 6 November 2014, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB1013.pdf>.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., ix.

identifies the gap in US capability saying that DOS and DOJ contracted police support fail to deploy quickly enough, operate in hostile environments, and stay long enough.<sup>62</sup> He further examines the impact embedded police advisors have on the organizational culture of a police force, explaining that without a long-term embedded presence, the corrupt or failed organizational culture of a police force will inevitably corrupt newly trained members.<sup>63</sup>

In “Low-Cost Trigger-Pullers: The Politics of Policing in the Context of Contemporary ‘State Building’ and Counterinsurgency,” William Rosenau examines the development and use of police in counterinsurgencies in the context of Afghanistan and Iraq. He highlights three issues the US has faced and continues to face: a misunderstanding of the difficulty of developing a foreign police force, the misuse of police forces in counterinsurgencies, and the failure to look beyond State institutions in improving security in failed states.<sup>64</sup> Rosenau discusses previous foreign police capacity building and common pitfalls policymakers faced. He describes the political nature of police forces that are designed to support regimes. In doing so, he provides an excellent overview of the political economy of attempting to change the organization or function of police forces.<sup>65</sup> Rosenau explains that police forces outside of Organization for Economic

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<sup>62</sup> Keller, 19.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>64</sup> William Rosenau, *Low-Cost Trigger-Pullers: The Politics of Policing in the Context of Contemporary ‘State Building’ and Counterinsurgency* (Santa Monica: Rand National Security Research Division, October 2008), 1, accessed 6 November 2014. [http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/working\\_papers/2009/RAND\\_WR620.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/working_papers/2009/RAND_WR620.pdf).

<sup>65</sup> Rosenau, 19.

Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries are normally one of the main sources of instability.<sup>66</sup> They are corrupt, and people avoid them at all cost. Writing separately about paramilitary police forces, he views creating them as a, “relatively straightforward endeavor, as it requires little or no culturally specific instruction, and can be carried out by rapidly deployable military advisors.”<sup>67</sup>

In “Police Reform in Latin America: Implications for US Policy,” Stephen Johnson, Johanna Forman, and Katherine Bliss review past US police capacity building efforts in Latin America, highlight inadequacies, and make comprehensive policy recommendations.<sup>68</sup> The report primarily focuses on US support through civilian law enforcement agencies. The authors advocate for US police assistance in the region and describe several areas which need to be improved: US law governing foreign police assistance, the appointment of a lead agency, improved interagency cooperation, long-term planning, and better anticipation of security needs.<sup>69</sup> The report is the most recent and comprehensive work on police assistance in the region. It details US historical involvement, and the challenges faced in each country and region in Latin America.

In “Policing and Security in Latin America: The Need for Reform,” Peter DeShazo summarizes a series of presentations on police reform in Latin America. The

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<sup>66</sup> Rosenau, 18.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>68</sup> Stephen Johnson, Johanna Forman, and Katherine Bliss, *Police Reform in Latin America: Implications for US Policy* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 2012), 8, accessed 5 October 2013, [http://csis.org/files/publication/120228\\_Johnson\\_PoliceReform\\_web.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/120228_Johnson_PoliceReform_web.pdf).

<sup>69</sup> Johnson, 48.

report concluded that police reform is necessary, but it requires the political will of the regimes in the region.<sup>70</sup> At the same time, it continues to be a sensitive topic in the region, and human rights organizations are interested in developing and maintaining “accountability, transparency, and oversight.”<sup>71</sup> Representing an established voice of the human rights community, Joy Olson, Executive Director of the Washington Office on Latin America, found “the use of Special Forces to train civilian police especially troubling and a ‘blurring of the lines’ between support for the military and the police, with undesirable outcomes.”<sup>72</sup>

In *Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of US Policy*, editors Coletta Younger and Eileen Rosin present a policy analysis of US supply-side reduction efforts in the War on Drugs in Latin America. The work provides detailed historical analysis of cases from each of the Andean Ridge countries and Mexico. It presents US efforts to reduce supply in the 1990s and early 2000s as a failure. Important to this study, their research identifies police and military units trained by US SOF throughout this period, and highlights various issues in each country. Their research highlights the dangers and failures of militarizing counterdrug efforts. They recommend not using SOF to train local police, not using military forces in a police role, and for the

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<sup>70</sup> Peter Deshazo, *Policing and Security in Latin America: The Need for Reform* (Washington, DC: The Center for Strategic and International Studies, May 2005), 7, accessed 5 September 2014, <http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/ppreform%5B1%5D.pdf>.

<sup>71</sup> DeShazo, 8.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

US to focus on strengthening local police capacity, and building specialized units that are responsible to “local civilian authorities.”<sup>73</sup>

In “Exporting The Colombian ‘Model’: Comparing Law Enforcement Strategies Towards Security and Stability Operations in Colombia and México,” Michael Loconsolo analyzes the Colombian National Police security model and how it might apply to Mexico. In the Colombian case he discusses US SOF’s supporting role in targeting the Medellin and Cali cartels. The work is useful to this research in its analysis of the role of national police units in countering transnational organized crime and in the role of US SOF in training units. Loconsolo ultimately concludes that the Colombian and Mexican security challenges and their root causes are not similar, but that many of the efforts made in Colombia could be modified to support efforts in Mexico.<sup>74</sup>

Looking across the existing body of literature, there is a gap. Only a few works describe or investigate the use of Special Operations Forces to train national police units. However, authors have thoroughly studied transnational organized crime, the US strategy towards it, and the challenges of having military train community police. Consequently, a need exists for a more thorough examination of SF training of national police units and their contributions as part of combined efforts to combat transnational organized crime.

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<sup>73</sup> Coletta A. Youngers and Eileen Rosin, eds., *Drugs and Democracy in Latin America: The Impact of US Policy* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005), 347.

<sup>74</sup> Michael Loconsolo, “Exporting the Colombian ‘Model’: Comparing Law Enforcement Strategies Towards Security and Stability Operations in Colombia and México” (Master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2014), accessed 21 March 2015, <http://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/42676>.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The primary research question for this study is: Why are some US SF partnerships with Latin American MOI units more effective than others at countering transnational organized crime? The purpose of this study is to examine US SF relationships with host nation national police units as part of efforts to combat transnational organized crime in Latin America. Research focuses on secondary sources and primary source documents. Secondary sources provide the bulk of the case background information. The primary source documents provide information not available in the secondary sources and verify secondary source information. Answering the following secondary research questions contributes to the primary question's answer.

1. What are US objectives in partnering with national police units?
2. Under what conditions do SF partner with national police units?
3. How do SF improve national police capacity to defeat criminal networks?

#### Methodology

The analysis will employ qualitative analysis in the comparative case study method. Research will cover three cases: US SF support to the Bolivian, Colombian, and Honduran National Police. The case studies fall within the Latin American security assistance class, and the subclass of Special Forces support to police units. The unit of analysis in each case is the SF partnership program with the partner nation unit. The same independent variables are analyzed in each case to examine causal relationships with the

dependent variable. Following process-tracing in each case, the cases are compared to further analyze causal relationships.

#### Analysis Criteria: Dependent and Independent Variables

Research and analysis focus on the following criteria for each case in order to provide a defined basis for comparison and causal analysis. The dependent variable is the unit's effectiveness targeting transnational criminal networks in X country. Effective targeting of criminal networks is measured through a combination of arrests of network leadership, drug seizures, and noticeable decreases in homicides. The dependent variable is probabilistic not deterministic. Effectiveness is divided into high, medium, and low, to better identify the relationships with the independent variables.

The independent variables are US interagency support, partner nation support, corruption levels, and the duration of partnership. US interagency support is defined as cooperation provided by the DOS, the DEA, and the FBI measured by numbers of joint operations, extraditions, and statements of support. The level of US interagency activity is a proxy variable for US interagency support. Partner nation support is defined as the host nation political, military, and police support for the partnered unit measured by host nation joint operations, extraditions, and public statements. Corruption levels are defined as the degree of corruption, which exists within the host nation unit, measured by numbers of arrests and dismissals of unit members. The duration of the partnership is defined as the length of time the US partners with the host nation unit measured in years. Based on my literature review, my hypothesis is that US SF partnerships with Latin American MOI units are successful at countering transnational organized crime when they have full US interagency and host nation support.

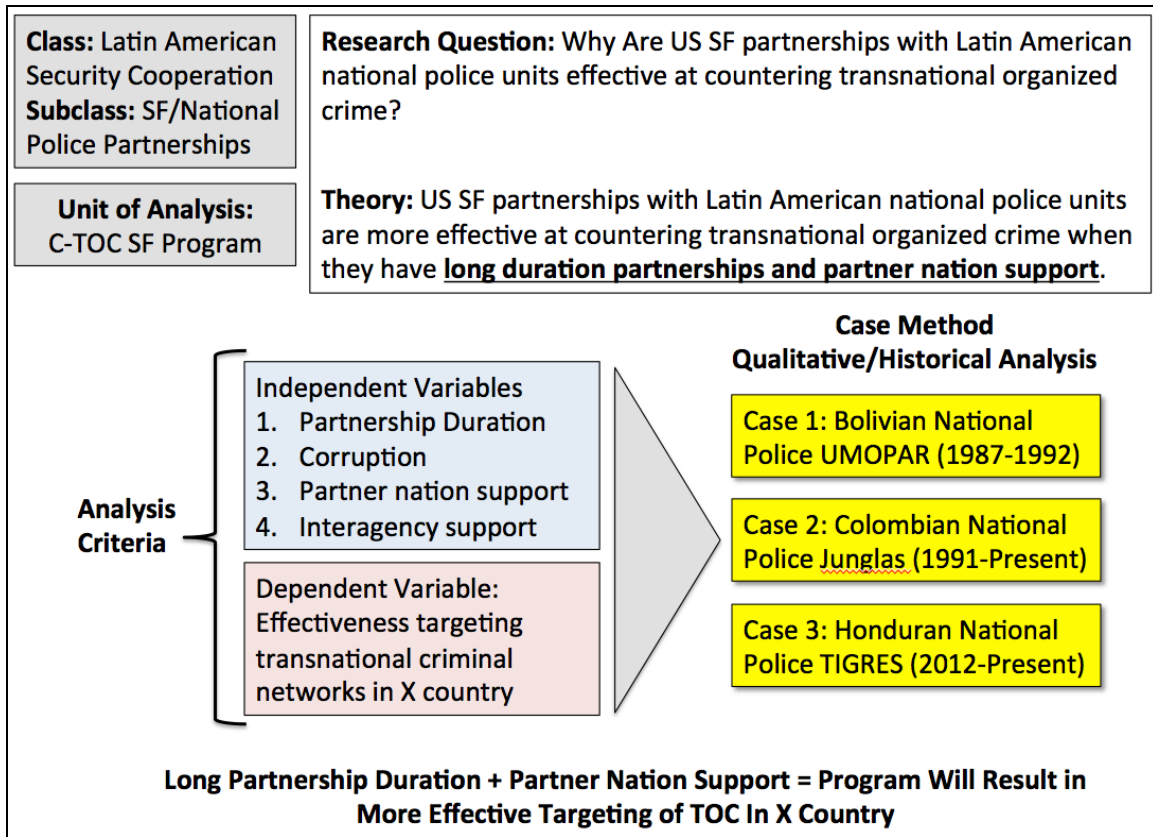


Figure 3. Research Design

Source: Created by author.

### Case Studies

This study examines US SF partnerships with MOI units in Bolivia, Colombia, and Honduras. Time, geography, and resources separate the case studies. The Bolivian case 1987-1995 occurs in the remote jungles of Bolivia, a peaceful source country. The Colombian case 1991-Present in the context of an insurgency and peak criminal activity. While in contrast, the Honduran case is still ongoing and occurs in a transit country with a high level of citizen insecurity. Colombia is a bigger country with greater resources than Honduras or Bolivia, which are among the poorest countries in the Hemisphere. All

three units studied were created to conduct drug seizures, capture criminal leadership, and ultimately dismantle powerful criminal organizations in times of high corruption and citizen insecurity.

The Bolivian case examines US Army Special Forces training of the Bolivian National Police beginning in 1987 and ending in 1992. US SF trained the *Unidad Móvil Policial para Áreas Rurales* (UMOPAR) in support of INL and DEA. The UMOPAR is a police unit organized and trained to patrol the remote jungle areas of Bolivian drug growing areas in order to destroy drug labs, airfields, and aircraft; interdict drug-shipments; and hunt HVTs. This case is important as one of the first cases of SF training police because it highlights initial lessons learned and the impact of corruption. It differs from the Colombian and Honduran cases because the first program lacked the security infrastructure and supporting international agreements that the other cases possessed. Many of the initial efforts to attack drug trafficking networks proved unsuccessful in the initial years. UMOPAR operations increased in effectiveness as supporting national laws and regional agreements were put in place, in addition to expansion of counterdrug forces and the creation of alternative crop programs for Bolivian farmers.

The Colombian case focuses on the Colombian National Police (CNP) during Plan Colombia from 1991 to the present. US SF trained the *Jungla Antinarcóticos* (Jungla) working in conjunction with INL and DEA. The Colombia case study is unique because the Colombian National Police fall under the Ministry of Defense. As a result, US SF through Plan Colombia could more easily train National Police units. This difference will help further highlight the role of interagency support. The case is also unique because in addition to criminal networks the Colombians were in the process of

fighting a counterinsurgency. Today, the Colombian case is used as a regional success story for security cooperation, and the US and Colombia export Colombian expertise to other countries in the region, to include Honduras.

The Honduran case focuses on the more recent *Toma Integral Gubernamental de Respuesta Especial de Seguridad* (TIGRES) program 2013-present. US SF are training a new unit in support of INL. The unit is tasked with defeating transnational criminal organizations in Honduras. It is in its fourth rotation of persistent SF engagement and also works in cooperation with other US Embassy interagency vetted units. This case differs from Colombia in that Honduras is a transit country for drugs, it does not have an ongoing counterinsurgency, and the duration of the partnership has been much shorter.

This study is limited to three cases because of the small number of cases in Latin America in which US SF have trained national police units to counter organized crime, due to limited time available to conduct research, and because of the limited amount of published information about each case. SF units have trained or conducted exchanges with other national police units. The 7th Special Forces Group also trained the following units: Peruvian National Police Sinchis (1989-1992), Ecuadorian Antinarcotics Police (1990-1997), Paraguayan *Secretaria Nacional Antidrogas* or SENAD (1996-2000), and several other Colombian National Police units. These cases were not selected due to a lack of sufficient information, a lack of time, or they were discovered later in the research process. In a variety of other cases, SF trained national police units more episodically, or trained joint national police-military units. Cases outside of Latin America such as Afghanistan or Iraq were not considered due to differences in the operational environment.

### Strengths and Weaknesses

This research design attempts to operationalize hard-to-measure variables. Transnational crime covers numerous illegal revenue streams and crosses borders. Furthermore, historical data of illegal activity in ungoverned spaces can be inconsistent or nonexistent. Variables are measured across several factors to compensate for this limitation. In the operationalization of the variables, bias is limited by using multiple measurements for variables. In the Bolivian case, transnational organized crime was in the developmental phase, and the main objective of the US was not to dismantle criminal networks as much as it was to cut the supply of illegal drugs destined for the US. As a result, much of the data used for measures of performance and effectiveness is in the form of quantity of drugs seized or number of labs destroyed. An additional design challenge is that Honduras is a newer case and as a result some second and third order effects of the program may not yet be apparent. An additional challenge is the lack of cases within the subclass. Other cases exist in which SF train joint military and police units; however, there are few in which SF train police purely units. The limited number of cases analyzed makes it more difficult to extrapolate the data and say that the theory applies beyond these cases. Thus, considering time and case limitations, the small number enables a greater depth of investigation. Furthermore, the cases will provide the groundwork for other researchers to conduct further research.

### Areas for Additional Study

There are several interesting areas for additional research within this class and subclass of research. As discussed, there are a number of other cases in Latin America in which US SF trained national police units. Of these, the Peruvian National Police Sinchis,

seemed the most similar to both the Junglas and the UMOPAR. Additionally, in Colombia, US SF also trained the *Comandos de Operaciones Especiales* COPES, which falls under a different directorate of the CNP. These and other cases could expand the depth of this research. As discussed there are several examples in which Latin American countries in partnership with the US have established joint military and police task forces, such as Guatemala, El Salvador, Colombia and Peru. Little academic research has been conducted on the effectiveness of these units. An additional area for study is the economics of the global security market and its interaction with US security assistance efforts such as those discussed in this paper. In many instances, the US trains police and military professionals and then trains new ones over and over as the best trained personnel leave low paying military and police jobs for high paying private security jobs in the region or as far away as the Middle East. Further areas for study include what the overall impact these security efforts have on the stabilization of weak states facing TCOs, and how best to integrate security assistance efforts as part of a larger stabilization effort.

### Collection Plan

The information and data for this research is primarily in digital form in policy papers, databases, and news articles. Organizational data will be collected through US officers with current and former experience in Colombia and Honduras. The literature review established the basis for current research and secondary sources. Further research focuses on organizational documents.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

#### Introduction

This chapter begins with an analysis of each case. Case results are presented upfront, followed by process-tracing of the case, and then an analysis of dependent and independent variables. After all three cases are analyzed, comparisons are made across the cases in order to identify relevant conclusions.

#### Bolivia

##### Introduction

The Bolivian Case was the first effort by the US SF to train police to target drug trafficking and criminal networks. It is important to note that during the time period of the first case, drug trafficking was the specific target of US efforts. The world was on the verge of globalization, and transnational organized crime was just beginning to emerge. In this case, US Army Special Forces from the 7th SFG(A) and members of SOUTHCOM trained and supported the development and employment of the Mobile Police Unit for Rural Areas or UMOPAR (*Unidad Móvil Policial para Áreas Rurales*). This case will briefly cover the strategic environment and its impacts on the SF training program. It will then cover UMOPAR and the independent variables described in chapter 3, followed by an analysis of the case.

Table 1 presents the case finding as they relate to the dependent variable and four independent variables. The dependent variable was present. Special Forces successfully trained the UMOPAR, and the UMOPAR was more effective at conducting joint

missions with DEA over time. However, due to the short duration of the partnership and the presence of corruption the UMOPAR never progressed to a point in which they could operate independently of DEA operational leadership. Bolivia provided strong political partner nation support, but a lack of belief in the endeavor combined with military and police rivalry prevented the unit from independently targeting criminal organizations and drug operations.

Table 1. Research Results: Bolivia

Case	Dependent Variable Effectiveness Targeting TCOs	Independent Variable 1 Long Partnership Duration	Independent Variable 2 Corruption A Factor	Independent Variable 3 Partner Nation Support	Independent Variable 4 Interagency Support
Bolivia	Low	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Source:* Created by author.

#### Background: Strategic Environment

Bolivia's political history, economy, ethnic composition, and geography directly influenced US counterdrug efforts in the country. Bolivia has had more coups d'état than any other country in the world. In the 1980s Bolivia became the world's third largest producer of cocaine. In 1981, General Luis García Meza's authoritarian government collapsed under accusations of drug trafficking, and Bolivia transitioned to democracy.<sup>75</sup> Like much of Latin America, the transition coincided with economic collapse. The

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<sup>75</sup> Thomas Skidmore, Peter H. Smith, and James N. Green, *Modern Latin America*, 7th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 180.

commodity collapse of the early 1980s drove inflation to 60,000 percent in 1985.<sup>76</sup> Bolivia's ethnic diversity further impacted the cocaine industry because the population includes large percentages of indigenous groups, which have historic cultural relationships with coca, the base plant for cocaine. Coca was a part of much of the population's daily lives, and it accounted for 30 percent of Bolivia's economy at the time.<sup>77</sup> In addition to political instability, a weak economy, and cultural ties to coca, Bolivia faced the geographic challenge of the Andes mountains and the Amazon rain forest, making governing and securing the nation's borders and countryside near impossible. Coca primarily grows in the remote Chapare, Yungas, and Apolo regions, with the Chapare constituting roughly 70 percent of total production.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Skidmore, 180. 60,000 percent is the 4th highest inflation rate of any country in recorded history.

<sup>77</sup> Sewall H. Menzel, *Fire In The Andes: US Foreign Policy and Cocaine Politics in Bolivia and Peru* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997), 102.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

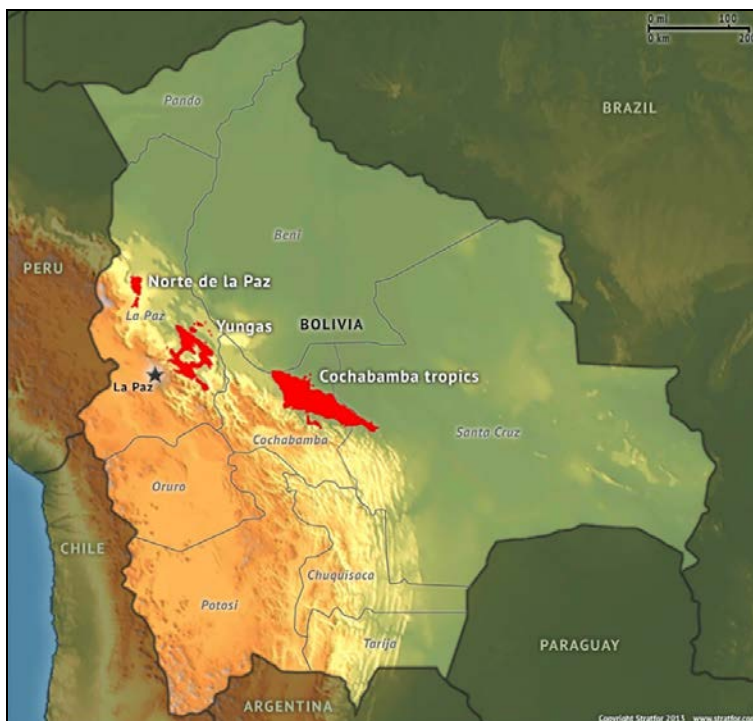


Figure 4. Map of Bolivia Coca Growing Areas

*Source:* STRATFOR Global Intelligence, “The Effect of Bolivian Elections on Coca Production,” 1 November 2013, accessed 3 May 2015, <https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/effect-bolivian-elections-coca-production>.



Figure 5. Photo of UMOPAR Flying Over The Chapare Region

*Source:* J. B. Russell, “Coca Wars,” J.B. Russell Images, April 1996, accessed 3 May 2015, <http://www.jbrussellimages.com/#/reportage/coca-wars/CocaWars-50>.

At the same time in the US, demand for cocaine, the legacy of the Vietnam War, and an evolution of drug policy impacted how the US developed cocaine demand in the US increased dramatically in the 1980s. In response to increased demand and crime rates in the US, the Reagan Administration implemented a drug policy to stop cocaine at its source. In 1986, President Reagan published National Security Directive (NSDD) 221, specifying “international drug trafficking” as a threat to US national security.<sup>79</sup> In Bolivia in October 1986, the US launched its first overseas counter-drug military operation named Operation Blast Furnace as part of the new policy.<sup>80</sup> However, it proved a major strategic failure, and as a result greatly impacted the direction of US counterdrug strategy.

The United States’ overly militarized execution of Operation Blast Furnace caused the operation’s failure. During the operation, Task Force Janus, composed of US Army Infantry personnel from the 193rd Infantry Brigade, 6 UH60 Blackhawk helicopters, and C5 Aircraft and C130 transport aircraft attempted to disrupt drug operations in the Chapare, Santa Cruz, and Beni areas.<sup>81</sup> The US negotiated Bolivian authorization for the operation through the Bolivian president, but not with the Bolivian Congress. Consequently, the large US military force conducted bilateral and unilateral counterdrug operations, which angered the Bolivian people who perceived the operation

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<sup>79</sup> Menzel, 99.

<sup>80</sup> Sergio De La Pena, “Analysis Of The Execution Of Counter-Drug Strategy In Bolivia Using The Low Intensity Conflict Imperatives” (Master’s thesis, Command and General Staff College, Leavenworth, KS, 1992), 64.

<sup>81</sup> De La Pena, 54; Juan L. Orama, “U.S. Military Evolution in Counternarcotics Operations in Latin America” (Strategy Research Project, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, April 2001), 20.

as an invasion and a violation of Bolivia's national sovereignty rather than law enforcement assistance.<sup>82</sup> During Blast Furnace, most of the drug traffickers working in the Chapare either hid or fled, and waited out the US military.<sup>83</sup> Task Force Janus and the UMOPAR destroyed 22 HCL laboratories.<sup>84</sup> The traffickers the US did capture were later released due to a lack of evidence. Thus overall, Blast Furnace failed to achieve operational effects and created strategic perception problems for US DOD efforts in supporting counterdrug efforts. DOD efforts shifted from a direct role to supporting the planning and execution of DEA and DOS programs.

US counterdrug efforts gained momentum after Blast Furnace as US cocaine demand continued to increase. Presidential action under Presidents Reagan and Bush Sr. engaged the Andean nations diplomatically to set the conditions for expanded counterdrug initiatives across the region.<sup>85</sup> President Bush's 1989 National Drug Control Strategy provided more than a billion dollars for the Andean ridge countries. During this time, national security objectives included the reduction of cocaine supply, the defeat of the principal trafficking organizations, and the increase of international counternarcotics cooperation.<sup>86</sup> The DOS Bureau of International Narcotics Matters (INM) attempted to

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<sup>82</sup> De La Pena, 66.

<sup>83</sup> Jaime Malamud-Goti, "Soldiers, Peasants, Politicians and the War on Drugs in Bolivia," *American University International Law Review* 6, no. 1 (1990): 42, accessed 20 December 2014, <http://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1550&context=auilr>.

<sup>84</sup> Menzel, 18.

<sup>85</sup> The Andean Ridge includes Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia.

<sup>86</sup> Menzel, 27.

reduce supply through near-term eradication efforts and long-term institution building in the Andean region.<sup>87</sup> INM facilitated an Andean interagency intelligence collection and sharing strategy to better integrate interagency and intergovernmental efforts.<sup>88</sup> During President Bush's administration, the US began the Andean Initiative, which consisted of a series of legislation to fund and authorize counter drug efforts in the region.

### Operation Snowcap

Following Operation Blast Furnace, the US developed a new long-term approach to reducing drug flows. The campaign known as Operation Snowcap focused interagency efforts among DOS, DEA, and DOD to train indigenous police units, develop Andean cooperation, and increase interdiction, with "the goal of reducing the flow of cocaine into the US by 50 percent in three years."<sup>89</sup> In 1989, under the Bush Administration, Operation Snowcap transitioned into the Andean Initiative, a component of the National Drug Control Strategy.<sup>90</sup>

### The UMOPAR

Bolivia formed the *Unidad Movil de Patrullaje Rural* (UMOPAR), also known as the "Leopardos," in 1983 to interdict drugs, arrest drug traffickers, and destroy drug labs in the remote Bolivian growing areas.<sup>91</sup> The remoteness of the coca growing areas

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<sup>87</sup> In 1995, INM became the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).

<sup>88</sup> Menzel, 27.

<sup>89</sup> De La Pena, 55.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>91</sup> Youngers, 149.

combined with the organized well-armed drug trafficking threat necessitated a police force capable of handling both. The US funded the formation of the unit with a \$4 million initial budget.<sup>92</sup> In the 1980s, the UMOPAR had approximately 640 National Policemen.<sup>93</sup>

US Special Forces began supporting the DOS Bolivia Narcotic Affairs Unit (NAU)<sup>94</sup> and the DEA in Bolivia as part of Operation Red Dragon by training and advising a Bolivian Special Police Unit.<sup>95</sup> Red Dragon was part of the greater Operation Snowcap, which was a region-wide program that provided US DOD and SF support to INM and DEA. Beginning in May 1987, Special Forces ODAs from A CO, 3rd BN, 7th SFG(A) deployed from Panama to Bolivia to train the UMOPAR. The first ODA built the UMOPAR a forward operating base at Chimore from which to train and conduct operations.<sup>96</sup> SF ODAs trained the UMOPAR first in Chimore and then expanded to bases in Villa Tunari and Ivirgazama. They conducted the first in a continuous series of 5-week Mobile Training Team (MTT) courses, training small unit infantry tactics, jungle operations, survival, communications and map-reading. Training focused on the skills and collective tasks required to conduct small-unit jungle reconnaissance and raids. The UMOPAR needed to be able to infiltrate into an area offset from targets out of sight and

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<sup>92</sup> Menzel, 8.

<sup>93</sup> Orama, 21.

<sup>94</sup> The Narcotics Affairs Unit (NAU) was the predecessor of today's Narcotics Affairs Section (NAS) of the embassy.

<sup>95</sup> Orama, 21.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

sound and then move to targets undetected. They needed to sustain themselves in the jungle for weeks at a time and be able to communicate back to a base camp in order to conduct their counterdrug operations. The MTTs trained the UMOPAR to meet these requirements. 7th SFG(A) ODAs conducted 6 more MTTs in 1988 at Chimore in the Chapare.<sup>97</sup> Working together with a \$30 million budget (1981-1989), INM, DEA, and the SF ODAs identified initial requirements and coordinated with INM for purchase of food, uniforms, equipment, aircraft and boats for the UMOPAR. The DEA additionally supplemented UMOPAR salaries with a stipend to reduce the temptation of corruption. 7th SFG(A) maintained near continuous Red Dragon MTT rotations for four years (1987-1991).<sup>98</sup>

While the UMOPAR were responsible for conducting ground-based operations, early on it was clear that air and riverine capabilities were also required in order to conduct successful large-scale operations. The UMOPAR needed reliable infiltration and exfiltration platforms. The UMOPAR initially attempted to support themselves with their own boats, but quickly realized they lacked the requisite expertise. Therefore Ambassador Rowell directed LTC Hayes of the US Military Group to create two dedicated support units: *Diablos Rojos* “Red Devils” helicopter and light aircraft unit from the Bolivian Air Force and *Diablos Azules* “Blue Devils” riverine unit from the Bolivian Navy. US Coast Guard, US Marine Corps, Navy SEAL platoons, and Navy

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<sup>97</sup> US Government Accountability Office, *Drug Control U.S.-Supported Efforts in Colombia and Bolivia: Report to Congress* (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, November 1988), 53, accessed 15 February 2015, <http://www.gao.gov/products/NSIAD-89-24>; James Painter, *Bolivia and Coca: A Study in Dependency* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1994), 81.

<sup>98</sup> Orama, 21.

Special Boat units trained the Blue Devils through their own series of MTTs, while Army and Air Force trainers trained the Red Devils.<sup>99</sup> Although, the original intent of the Blue Devils was to transport the UMOPAR, as their size and capabilities increased, MTTs with the Navy Special Boat Units and the US Coast Guard led to their independent use as a riverine interdiction unit.<sup>100</sup> The development of these units and the decision to use the military instead of the police, created operational issues for the UMOPAR and DEA.

After four years of conducting MTTs, 7th SFG(A) began Operation Stone Bridge in 1991. As part of Stone Bridge, SF ODAs transitioned to train-the-trainer MTTs in order to build an organic UMOPAR training team, which would execute the same blocks of training that the MTTs had been doing. During this period, SF NCOs observed and mentored the trainers. The SF trainers also trained and advised the DEA agents working with the UMOPAR during the same MTT deployments.<sup>101</sup>

Throughout Operations Snowcap, Red Dragon, and Stone Bridge, the UMOPAR accompanied by DEA agents conducted a series of large scale operations similar in scale to Blast Furnace, intended to accomplish the stated 50 percent reduction in cocaine flows. Limited by authorities, the SF trainers were not authorized to accompany the DEA agents or their UMOPAR counterparts. One of the first of these major raids occurred in San Ramon in 1989. In another major operation, named Operation Safe Haven, the UMOPAR, DEA, US Coast Guard, and US Border Patrol swept through the area

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<sup>99</sup> Orama, 21; Menzel, 31.

<sup>100</sup> Paul F. Willey, "The Art Of Riverine Warfare From An Asymmetrical Approach" (Master's thesis, Naval Post Graduate School, March 2004), 16, accessed 12 December 2014, <http://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/1682>.

<sup>101</sup> Orama, 25.

surrounding Santa Ana de Yacuma with a 600 man force. With each successive mission the DEA and DOD improved their planning integration, and increasingly improved their results through the early 1990s. SOUTHCOM provide DOD planners to assist in the planning and coordination of these larger missions.<sup>102</sup> This increase in cooperation coincided with increased resources from the Bush Administration and the DEA's transition to a "King Pin" strategy, in which they began targeting key leaders, capabilities, and infrastructure. During Operation Ghost Zone in 1992, a combined interagency effort attempted to cut all trafficking in Bolivia and eliminate labs in departments of El Beni, Pando, and Santa Cruz.<sup>103</sup> By this point US SF support shifted to other priorities in the region and to Bolivia's armed forces. DEA and UMOPAR continued to receive planning and intelligence support from DOD Tactical Analysis Teams, but the near continuous MTTs ceased.

### Corruption

Corruption in the Bolivian case is assessed as high. Corruption from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s penetrated the highest levels of the Bolivian government and security forces, and as a result compromised the efforts of the DEA, DOD, DOS, and the

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<sup>102</sup> Painter, 82.

<sup>103</sup> The King Pin strategy focused resources and operations against the largest trafficking organizations. "The DEA planned to disable major organizations by attacking their most vulnerable areas—the chemicals needed to process the drugs, their finances, communications, transportation, and leadership structure." Drug Enforcement Administration, "Drug Enforcement Administration Official History, 1990-1994," 85, accessed 13 January 2015, <http://www.dea.gov/about/history.shtml>; William W. Mendel and David G. Bradford, "Interagency Cooperation: A Regional Model For Overseas Operations" (FT McNair, Washington DC: National Defense University Institute For National Strategic Studies, March 1995), 66.

UMOPAR. DEA and DOD planners routinely withheld the details of missions and their targets until the last minute to avoid compromise. During the San Ramon raid in 1989, DEA did not inform the UMOPAR of their target until they were airborne in their helicopters en route to the target.<sup>104</sup> In 1986, as a result of corruption allegations, Bolivia replaced the leadership of the National Directorate for the Control of Dangerous Substances (DNCSP) *Direccion Nacional para el Control de Sustancias Peligrosas*. New leadership from the Police General Command took over; however, corruption continued.<sup>105</sup> In 1988, a GAO report noted that “extensive corruption at all levels of the Bolivian government, [and] the general lack of support for narcotics interdiction and control efforts by the government of Bolivia,” were two of three principal reasons for limited success in Bolivia.<sup>106</sup> The same report stated that, “corruption is widespread and generally accepted within the Bolivian police, military, and judicial systems, [and that] Bolivian police officers tolerate corruption among their peers and, in some instances, accept offers to protect narcotics traffickers.”<sup>107</sup> In 1989, Bolivia gave COL Luis Arce Gómez, the former Minister of the Interior, to US authorities for prosecution in the US.<sup>108</sup> In 1991, DOS pushed the Bolivian Government for the dismissal of COL Faustino Rico Toro, a Bolivian Army Officer and the commander of the UMOPAR. Toro previously

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<sup>104</sup> De La Pena, 59.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>106</sup> US Government Accountability Office, *Drug Control U.S.-Supported Efforts in Colombia and Bolivia*, 54.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Painter, 84.

maintained questionable relationships within the corrupt García Meza regime.<sup>109</sup> In 1995, the US succeed in extraditing COL Rico Toro for prosecution for his drug trafficking activities.<sup>110</sup> The DOS suspected that COL Rico Toro was one of many officials placed in high positions within the government to facilitate trafficking.<sup>111</sup> Also in 1991, LTC Alberto Rabaza, the Commander of the UMOPAR in Oruro, killed himself following the discovery of his role in facilitating the trafficking precursor chemicals from Chile into Bolivia.<sup>112</sup>

Even though the US provided Bolivian police officers serving in the UMOPAR food, clothing, logistical support, and salary supplements, the allure of drug trafficking money was clearly significant.<sup>113</sup> According DOS, in 1987, a LTC in the UMOPAR earned \$440 a month. Meanwhile, the same LTC could earn \$20,000-25,000 (1987 dollars) for guaranteeing no action for 72 hours, or the passage of one shipment.<sup>114</sup> Coincidentally, as a result of early warning, in 1991 the UMOPAR and DEA failed to capture any significant TCO leadership during Operation Safe Haven.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Painter, 72.

<sup>110</sup> Department of Justice, “Former Bolivian Officer Extradited To U.S. To Face Drug Charges,” Department of Justice Press Release, 31 March 1995, accessed 17 February 2015, [http://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/Pre\\_96/March95/178.txt.html](http://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/Pre_96/March95/178.txt.html).

<sup>111</sup> Painter, 72.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> US Government Accountability Office, *Drug Control U.S.-Supported Efforts in Colombia and Bolivia*, 55.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>115</sup> Painter, 82.

At the same time, UMOPAR officials would complain that US planners and agents did not trust them enough to include them in mission planning.<sup>116</sup> In fact, there was a lack of trust between DEA and the UMOPAR in planning and executing these missions. The lack of trust impacted operations. Proper planning and execution of large scale operations such as those conducted by DEA and UMOPAR depends on universal knowledge of the plan.

#### Partner Nation Support

The UMOPAR had mixed partner nation support. At the national level, US monetary support during critical economic times provided the US leverage and thus political support especially at the Presidential level in Bolivia. This was evident in 1986, when Bolivian President Paz Estenssoro allowed Task Force Janus to deploy a US force to arrest Bolivian citizens without the approval of Congress. Even after large-scale opposition to Operation Blast Furnace and in the face of the perception that the US was militarizing Bolivian counter drug efforts, Bolivian President Paz Zamora, “personally approved the entry of 112 American military advisors into Bolivia in accordance with the May 1990 bilateral antinarcotics treaty.” The approval led to a national strike and a wave of protests.<sup>117</sup> President Zamora also pushed through Bolivian Law 1008, which delineated legal and illegal coca growing areas to better support UMOPAR and US targeting of illegal drugs and trafficking. At the same time, the Bolivians provided this

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<sup>116</sup> Painter, 82.

<sup>117</sup> Christopher P. Moosman, “The Role of Security Assistance in The Andean Initiative” (Master’s thesis, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, September 1992), 111.

political support out of necessity versus true belief in the US counterdrug cause. Bolivia needed economic support, and that support was tied to its reciprocal support of the US counterdrug program. Thus, at the unit level, the officers and men would do what was asked of them as part of their job, but the unit lacked the leadership and drive to pursue missions on its own.

At the same time the fact that the UMOPAR fell under the Social Defense and the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) led to institutional rivalries between the MOI and the Ministry of Defense (MOD). The police and the military in Bolivia have a history of distrust and conflict. In 1952 and 1964, armed groups from both institutions engaged in combat in the support of respective political groups. This rivalry was still evident in 1989, when a Bolivian military officer explained, “continued U.S military training and equipping of the Bolivian Police would result in renewed conflict because the police would feel capable of confronting the army.”<sup>118</sup> 1991 interviews with Army SF and Navy SEAL trainers indicated this same conflict occurred at the unit level. In one instance, Bolivian soldiers beat up an UMOPAR agent for being UMPOPAR, and in other case the Blue Devils refused to work with UMOPAR members.<sup>119</sup> Multiple incidents occurred in the Chapare between the UMOPAR and the Army in 1989 as well.<sup>120</sup> Thus, while the UMOPAR received national level support from the government, it received mixed support from the other military branches, who resented the additional funding, equipment and training the UMOPAR received.

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<sup>118</sup> De La Pena, 80.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>120</sup> Menzel, 55.

## US Interagency Support

US interagency support overall was good. While in the late 1980s US SOF did not have a lot of experience working with DEA and vice versa, the relationship evolved into a strong working relationship. The Army SF trainers faced the operational limitation of not being able to accompany their UMOPAR partners on operations. This led to some issues of UMOPAR complaints that DEA was not leading missions in the same way that they had trained with the SF trainers.<sup>121</sup> However, this appears to have happened on a limited basis. Overall, the US Ambassadors to Bolivia, DOS, INM, and DEA all supported the Army SF trainers and the interagency effort, although a learning process, worked effectively. SOUTHCOM support from General Maxwell Thurman and interagency cooperation from DIA, CIA, US Customs, and the FBI to improve intelligence fusion for UMOPAR targeting.<sup>122</sup>

## Duration of Partnership

US Army Special Forces trained the UMOPAR from 1987 through 1992. From 1987 to 1991 training consisted of SF MTTs in a near-constant rotation after which, US SF trained UMOPAR instructors and SF engagement subsequently tapered off. ODAs shifted their partnership to two Bolivian Army Ranger Battalions, with the intent for the Army to also participate in the counterdrug effort.<sup>123</sup> However, this never occurred. Meanwhile, the 7th SFG(A) trainers were also exceptionally busy during this period,

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<sup>121</sup> Painter, 82.

<sup>122</sup> Menzel, 104.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 56.

working in Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, and El Salvador and conducting Operation Just Cause in Panama. The duration of the partnership was sufficient to train the UMOPAR to the level they needed to be in order to work effectively with DEA.

### Targeting of Transnational Criminal Networks

The UMOPAR were not overly successful at countering criminal networks or stemming the production, processing, or flow of drugs during this time. Between 1988 and 1991 drug seizures were insignificant relative to the total quantity of drugs produced annually. Seizures in 1988 and 1989 represented 0.5 percent of both paste and cocaine produced. In 1990, the UMOPAR destroyed 100 percent more laboratories and maceration pits, but still failed to dent Bolivian production. The police interdicted 200 kilograms of the 72 tons produced that year. By 1991, the UMOPAR destroyed over 4 times the number of HCL labs as they did in 1990, but still seizures represented only 2 percent of Bolivia's total annual production.<sup>124</sup> Most INL and DEA historical data for this period focuses on the destruction of labs, maceration pits, and interdiction numbers because the US government's goal at this time was to effect a supply reduction to the point that it made trafficking unprofitable. The arrests of traffickers and criminal organization leadership remained very low during this period.

### Conclusions

The UMOPAR's lack of success in this instance is attributed to the balloon and cockroach effects on DEA's and UMOPAR's operational approach, the lack of regional counterdrug legislation and security cooperation, and pervasive corruption within the

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<sup>124</sup> Painter, 82.

Bolivian government and security forces. The market nature of the drug production and smuggling made attacking the supply futile because the market adjusted to new production and trafficking areas. US and UMOPAR efforts pushed traffickers across borders to Brazil, Peru, Paraguay or to different areas within Bolivia.<sup>125</sup> However, production in Bolivia eventually dropped off significantly in the late 1990s and early 2000s due to new laws, increased Bolivian capacity, and increased multilateral efforts. Corruption clearly undermined UMOPAR efforts at every level, enabling traffickers to maintain production and escape capture. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the UMOPAR policed the Chapare, an area roughly equivalent to New Jersey, with only 600 officers.<sup>126</sup> US Special Forces succeeded in building partner capacity in the UMOPAR. The unit could conduct operations against criminal organizations with DEA and DOD leadership and assistance. US SF professionalized the UMOPAR through everyday interaction.

DOS, DOD, and DEA all learned many lessons with each subsequent operation at this time, which led to the creation of Joint Planning and Assistance Teams (JPAT) and Tactical Analysis Teams (TATs) and development of intelligence sharing across the theater. These capabilities integrated DOD and SOF planners into embassies and the units in order to better facilitate the sharing of intelligence in the interagency process, the integration of experienced planners, and the leveraging of DOD unique capabilities which played a role in the next case.

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<sup>125</sup> Menzel, 107.

<sup>126</sup> US Government Accountability Office, *Drug Control U.S.-Supported Efforts in Colombia and Bolivia: Report to Congress* (Washington, DC: Government Accounting Office, November 1988), 54, accessed 15 February 2015, <http://www.gao.gov/products/NSIAD-89-24>.

## Colombia

### Introduction

The Colombian Case examines US Special Forces efforts to train the Colombian National Police (CNP) Junglas. This case will cover the strategic environment and its impact on the SF training program. It will then cover the Junglas, the US training program, and the independent variables described in chapter 3, followed by an analysis of the case. The case begins in the early 1990s and thus shares the same US domestic drug context and the multinational accords as the Bolivian case.

Table 2 presents the case finding as they relate to the dependent variable and four independent variables. The dependent variable was present. The Junglas became very effective at unilaterally, bilaterally, or jointly targeting transnational criminal organizations. The partnership was the longest of the three and the key independent variable to the US SF partnership with the unit. Corruption was not a factor. Partner nation support was an important factor in sustaining the long-duration partnership and in the Colombian initiative to execute missions against TCOs on their own. Interagency support was present in the form of INL, DEA, and DOD support.

Table 2. Research Results: Colombia

Case	<b>Dependent Variable</b> Effectiveness Targeting TCOs	<b>Independent Variable 1</b> Long Partnership Duration	<b>Independent Variable 2</b> Corruption A Factor	<b>Independent Variable 3</b> Partner Nation Support	<b>Independent Variable 4</b> Interagency Support
Colombia	High	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

*Source:* Created by author.

## Background: Strategic Environment

The case is set initially in Colombia in the 1980s and 1990s as US cocaine, crack, and heroine demand increased, and the country's security situation deteriorated. Colombia's murder rate rose from 32 homicides per 100,000 to 79 between 1983 and 1992.<sup>127</sup> Pablo Escobar's Medellin Cartel and the Rodríguez Orejuela brothers' Cali Cartel dominated the drug trade, exerting influence throughout Colombia and the region. They waged a campaign of corruption and violence against the police, the army, and the government. Political assassinations peaked. At the same time, Colombia also faced two communist insurgent groups: the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia–Ejército del Pueblo* (FARC-EP) and the *Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional* (ELN). Adding a further dimension of complexity, both cartels funded local militias to protect their businesses. Thus, the Colombian government, national police, and the military faced a complex security environment with an underequipped, underfunded, and outsized force. Rampant corruption and ineffectiveness contributed to low public approval ratings and high levels of distrust.

Colombia's physical and human geography influenced its security situation by dividing the country into vast difficult-to-govern spaces. The Western Mountain Range, the Central Mountain Range, and the Eastern Mountain Range combine with the Magdalena River basin, numerous other rivers and triple canopy jungles to limit ground based travel. These physical challenges are further complicated by dispersed rural

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<sup>127</sup> María Victoria Llorente, "Demilitarization in Times of War? Police Reform in Colombia," in *Public Security Reform in the Americas*, eds. John Bailey and Lucía Dammert (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005), 191, accessed 31 March 2015, [http://www.fes-seguridadregional.org/images/stories/docs/4705-001\\_g.pdf](http://www.fes-seguridadregional.org/images/stories/docs/4705-001_g.pdf).

populations, indigenous groups, jungle borders, and two coasts: Atlantic and Pacific, and the Central American corridor. This geography limits a government's ability to provide services, govern, and protect its population. It additionally provides ample sanctuary for drug traffickers and insurgents.



Figure 6. Map of Colombia

*Source:* US Central Intelligence Agency, “Colombia Shaded Relief,” University of Texas Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, 2008, accessed 3 May 2015, [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/colombia\\_physio-2008.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/colombia_physio-2008.jpg).

The main focus of US security assistance throughout the 1990s was counternarcotics, which directed the US military to work with the CNP over the military. US counternarcotics strategy in Colombia targeted drug trafficking organizations' leadership, supply reduction through eradication, and BPC of the Colombian legal system and National Police. DEA, NAS, INL, and US SOF worked together with the CNP to defeat Colombia's criminal organizations. The CNP and DEA targeted criminal leadership and networks. The CNP and NAS Bogota eradicated coca crops. The DEA, NAS, and 7th Special Forces Group built CNP capacity.<sup>128</sup> In Colombia, the CNP fall under the Ministry of Defense.<sup>129</sup> These motivations, combined with Colombia's geography, necessitated a police force capable of confronting large, heavily-armed criminal organizations based in rural areas in which road, river, and air early warning easily compromised a unit's approach. One answer to the problem was the creation of a Police Special Operations Unit.

### The Junglas

In 1989, the British Special Air Service (SAS) worked with the CNP to establish a specially assessed, selected, and trained Jungle Commando unit to destroy jungle-based laboratories, interdict drug shipments, and attack criminal networks. Called the Airmobile Interdiction (Jungla) Program, the British and Colombians built a company-sized unit

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<sup>128</sup> Robert Ramsey III, *From El Billar to Operations Fenix and Jaque: The Colombian Security Force Experience 1998-2008*, Occasional Paper 34 (Ft Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2009), 20, accessed 17 January 2015, <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/cgsc/carl/download/csipubs/ramseyop34.pdf>.

<sup>129</sup> Kenneth Finlayson, "There Is A Word I Need To Learn: ODA 741 and Colombian National Police Training at Espinal." *Veritas Magazine* 2, no. 4: 84.

over a two-year period.<sup>130</sup> The initial six-month courses focused on building new capabilities, specifically jungle operations and small unit tactics.<sup>131</sup> The British ran the program for two years, training two classes, Jungla 1 and 2, before handing it off to the US DOS NAS Bogota and the 7th SFG(A) in 1991.<sup>132</sup>

US partnership with the Junglas has spanned 24 years (1991-2015). Within these efforts, INL, DEA, and US SOF assisted the CNP in improving the Jungla unit and its capacity. These efforts break down into three phases. Phase I was the unit's initial operating capability, and its employment against the Medellin, Cali, Valle del Norte cartels. (1991-2000). During Phase I, US SF helped run the Jungla school and fuse intelligence and operations. Phase II encompassed Plan Colombia (2000-2010). During Phase II, US SF assisted the CNP in expanding the Junglas and training them on new operational paradigms that relied on new aircraft, force structure, and equipment. Phase III followed Plan Colombia (2010-2015). During Phase III, US SF worked with experienced Jungla units to improve training, planning, and targeting capabilities, and in the conduct of security assistance to other countries.

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<sup>130</sup> Janice Burton, "Colombian Special Operations Units," *Special Warfare* 25, no. 4 (October-December 2012): 43.

<sup>131</sup> dialogoamericas.com, "Junglas: The Narcos' Worst Nightmare," *Dialogo Digital Military Magazine*, 1 October 2012, accessed 21 March 2015, [http://dialogoamericas.com/en\\_GB/articles/rmisa/features/knowledge\\_is\\_power/2012/10/01/feature-pr-2](http://dialogoamericas.com/en_GB/articles/rmisa/features/knowledge_is_power/2012/10/01/feature-pr-2).

<sup>132</sup> Nic Jenzen-Jones, "Run Through The Jungle: Colombia's JUNGLA Commandos," *The Small Wars Journal*, 22 November 2011, accessed 21 March 2015, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/run-through-the-jungle-colombia%E2%80%99s-jungla-commandos>.

### Phase I: Initial Operating Capability (1991-2000)

US Special Forces began training the Colombian police and military in support of operations against Pablo Escobar and the Medellin Cartel in 1989. US Special Forces supported the effort for four years, ending with Escobar's death in December 1993. The 7th SFG(A) had trained other CNP units at the CNP police-training center in Espinal in 1989.<sup>133</sup> US Special Forces expanded its assistance through the establishment of the Operational Planning Group (OPG) in 1993. The OPG worked with the CNP and DEA to fuse intelligence and operations in order to improve counter drug targeting. Target packets went to the Junglas and the DIRAN, who would then execute operations with the DEA Narco-Terrorism Jungle Operations Group. At the time, 7th SFG(A) assessed the OPG role and its effects as very effective.<sup>134</sup> The CNP succeeded in defeating the Medellin and Cali cartels; nonetheless, US demand for cocaine remained unchanged. In the aftermath, the Norte del Valle Cartel (North Valley) led by Javier Antonio Calle Serna and Luis Enrique took control of the cocaine business through the end of the 1990s.

The Medellin and Cali Cartels' efforts to corrupt the national police created issues through the second half of the 1990s for the CNP. In 1996, President Clinton approved the DOS decertification of Colombia's counterdrug program, which cut funding and placed additional limitations on military and police security assistance. General Rosso Jose Serrano purged thousands of officers from the CNP and worked with DEA and INL to procure new aircraft and additional support. By 1998, the Jungla had built a training

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<sup>133</sup> Finlayson, 81. Two 7th SFG(A) members provided language support.

<sup>134</sup> Jeffrey Waddell, "US Army Special Forces Support to 'Plan Colombia,'" (Report, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 7 April 2003), 13.

cadre and took over running the 18-week Jungla course at the National Police School in Espinal Colombia.<sup>135</sup>

#### Phase II: Expansion and Development (2000-2010)

By 2000, the FARC-EP, ELN, and Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) paramilitary militias began taxing and supervising the cocaine production and trafficking, providing important revenue streams to fund their criminal activities. In 2005, the Colombian government (GOC) and the AUC reached an agreement to demobilize the AUC militias, however many of the disbanded AUC members reverted to forming criminal groups which the government called *bandas criminales* or BACRIM. The BACRIMs resumed control of drug trafficking in the old AUC areas of influence. Meanwhile, from 1999 to 2001, the FARC-EP forced the CNP out of more than 80 police stations.<sup>136</sup> By the mid 2000s, FARC-EP drug operations earned \$200-\$300 million per annually.<sup>137</sup> In response, President Clinton and the US Government adjusted policy, developing Plan Colombia, which represented a significant increase in US security assistance and important policy changes. On the Colombian side, the focus of Jungla operations shifted to the financial support of FARC-EP, ELN, and the AUC through the destruction of drug labs, and the targeting these organizations leadership. Plan Colombia changed the size and nature of security assistance from a strictly counter narcotics focus

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<sup>135</sup> Jenzen-Jones, 1.

<sup>136</sup> Finlayson, 81.

<sup>137</sup> Peter Chalk, *The Latin American Drug Trade: Scope, Dimensions, Impact, and Response* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2011), xii, accessed 20 January 2015, [http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2011/RAND\\_MG1076.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2011/RAND_MG1076.pdf).

to counter-narcoterrorism, which now included the FARC-EP and the ELN. Security assistance from DOS to the CNP between 2000 and 2007 increased to over \$153 million.<sup>138</sup> As part of Plan Colombia, US SOF building partner capacity (BPC) efforts in Colombia focused on Colombian SOF and units focused on pursuing the FARC and narcotraffickers.<sup>139</sup>

Jungla program expansion occurred at the same time as the expansion of Colombian security forces across the country. With Plan Colombia money, DIRAN and INL expanded the Junglas by two 166-man Jungla companies, increasing the line strength of the organization by 200 percent.<sup>140</sup> These changes combined with the first six UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters, altered Jungla doctrine, organization, training, material, leadership, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF).<sup>141</sup> By the end of Plan Colombia, the Junglas transformed their organization into what it is today. At almost the same time, INL hired a retired US Army Special Forces Colonel who was the previous Commander, US Military Group (USMILGP) for Colombia, a former SOCSOUTH J3, and a former 3rd BN 7th SFG(A) Commander, to manage the program. The Colonel would run the program from 2002 to 2011, overseeing INL's role in Junglas expansion, and a

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<sup>138</sup> US Government Accountability Office, *Report to The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr., Chairman Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate, Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals, Were Not Fully Met, But Security Has Improved; US Agencies Need More Detailed Plans For Reducing Assistance* (Washington, DC: Government Accountability Office, October 2008), 44.

<sup>139</sup> Ramsey, 110.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>141</sup> DOTMPLF is a DOD approach to organizational problem solving and development.

revitalized partnership between the 7th SFG(A) and the Junglas.<sup>142</sup> The SF experience, connections, and persistent engagement that the Junglas INL manager brought to the CNP proved pivotal in their growth over the next decade.

The Junglas organized into three 166-man line companies, a 65-man training company, and a special reconnaissance section, constituting a total force of approximately 600 policemen.<sup>143</sup> The line companies established bases in Santa Marta, Facatativa, and Tulua. The special reconnaissance section remained in Bogota, and the training company is located in Pijaos.<sup>144</sup> Companies divided into three sections, and section into squads of 12 men each.<sup>145</sup> The Junglas mission continued to be locating and destroying drug labs and clandestine landing strips, defeating criminal networks, and attacking HVTs. The mission expanded to include providing security assistance through international police training.<sup>146</sup> Subsequently, Junglas conducted further individual and unit training on tactical and operational planning, precision fires, explosive and ballistic breaching, demolitions, combat medicine, and communications.

The Plan Colombia expansion of the CNP organic aviation support through the CNP's Police Air Service (ARAVI) greatly improved the Junglas' capabilities. The ARAVI are supported by the DOS Office of Aviation and INL funding. They support the

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<sup>142</sup> Jenzen-Jones.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ricardo Alberto Restrepo Londoño, Director De Antinarcóticos, "Dirección De Antinarcóticos 2015" (Power Point Presentation, Bogotá, Colombia, January 2015), 10.

<sup>145</sup> dialogoamericas.com, "Junglas: The Narcos' Worst Nightmare."

<sup>146</sup> Restrepo, 7.

Junglas with logistical and tactical transportation. The UH-60s are equipped with M134 miniguns capable of providing suppressive air-to-ground fires via door gunners.<sup>147</sup> The Colombian Air Force additionally provides UH-60L *Arpía* gunship support for narcoterrorism targets.

The SF trainers worked with the Junglas on how to integrate these aircraft, fast-roping, GPS, air-to-ground support, new intelligence, and new weapons into their operations. The expansion of the force to 600 enabled the unit to conduct more operations and in greater size. The aircraft increased the range, speed, and size of the force delivered in support of drug labs and HVT raids. New optics, night vision, laser aiming devices, and heavy weapons increased the Junglas lethality and precision. SF trainers rotated through Espinal and the regional bases advising and training the Junglas. 7th SFG(A) continued to partner with the Junglas even as US SOF commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan grew in 2005. The size of the SOF force in Colombia dwindled, and the standing commitment of SF ODAs dropped to three.<sup>148</sup> In the 2005-2006 timeframe, the Colombians adopted the US Army's After Action Review (AAR) process, a critical tool to organizational, tactical, and leadership improvement, and an indicator of culture shift within the organization.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> US Government Accountability Office, *Report to The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr., Chairman Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate, Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals, Were Not Fully Met, But Security Has Improved; US Agencies Need More Detailed Plans For Reducing Assistance*, 43.

<sup>148</sup> Ramsey, 114.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

### Phase III: Process Improvement (2010-Present)

The capacity of the Junglas increased significantly as the organization changed during the Plan Colombia years. Operational priorities in Phase III focused on attacking BACRIM networks and leadership. In 2011, INL program management changed from the retired Army SF Colonel to a retired Army SF Lieutenant Colonel, another former 7th SFG(A) officer. Meanwhile, SF ODAs working with the Junglas had already begun adjusting their training approach. The Junglas were now a premier force in the hemisphere. SF trainers focused on process improvement, working to improve training Programs of Instruction (POIs) and developing the unit's advanced skills.<sup>150</sup> Centralized training in Espinal enabled ODAs to train small classes (50 or less students) at a time.<sup>151</sup> ODAs then shifted their organization to Operational Support Teams (OST), which split ODAs into two and three-man teams in order to advise all three line companies at the same time. OSTs conducted the equivalent of Battle Focused Analysis (BFA) to refine Jungla training needs and to develop Mission Essential Tasks Lists (METLs). Basically, what are the missions that the Junglas regularly conduct, what tasks are necessary to conduct those missions, and how can both be integrated into a training plan. ODAs taught "Attack the Network with Evidence-Based Operations" classes, relaying lessons learned from US experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>152</sup> Emphasis on Sensitive Site Exploitation (SSE), rehearsals, and Tactical Standard Operating Procedures (TSOP) contributed to the same goals. At the institutional level, OSTs pushed for greater intelligence coordination

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<sup>150</sup> Finlayson, 81.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>152</sup> ODA 7111, "Santa Marta Colombia Jungla Out Brie" (PowerPoint Presentation, Santa Marta, Colombia, 13 May 2014), 23.

with the DEA Special Investigative Units to facilitate improved Jungla mission planning. Trainers also focused on improving the Jungla company-level information preparation of the environment (IPE) in order to improve route selection, mission planning, and threat analysis.<sup>153</sup>

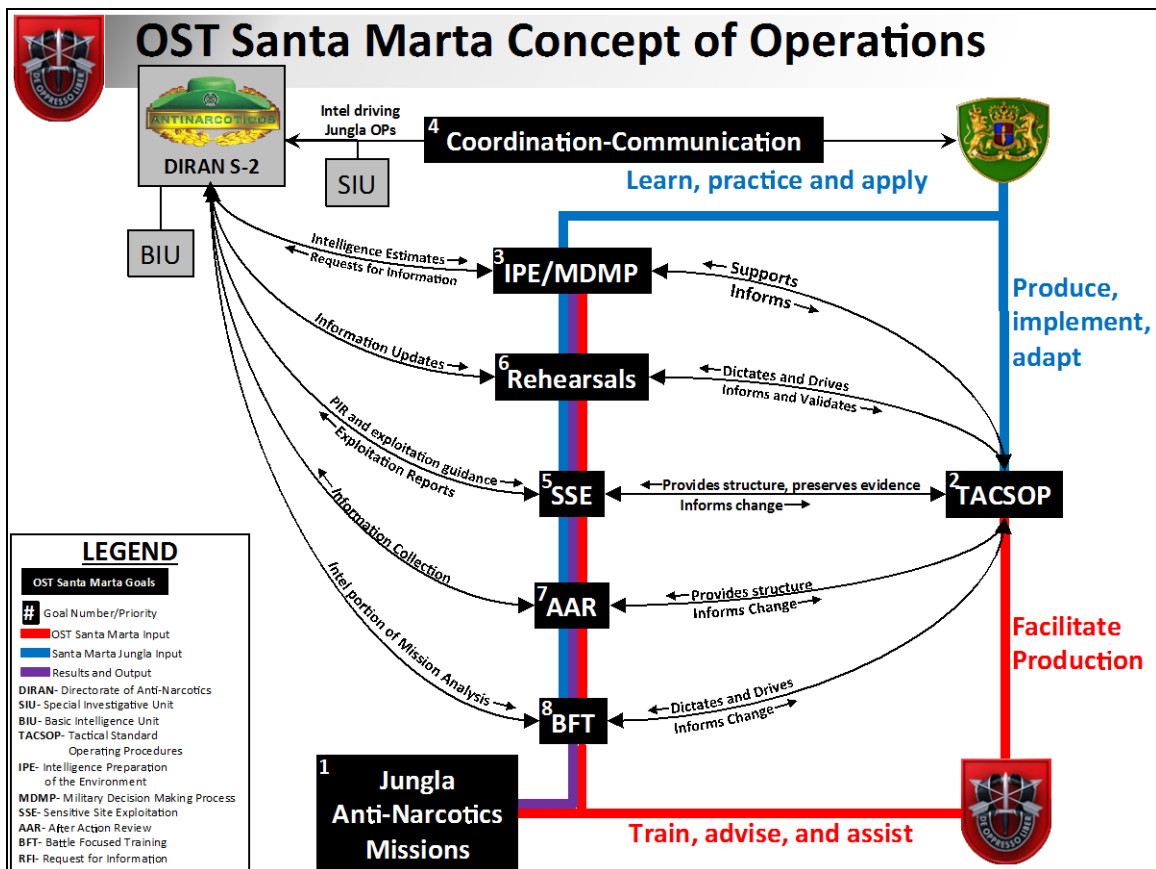


Figure 7. OST Concept of Operations

Source: ODA 7111, "Santa Marta Colombia Jungla Out Brief" (PowerPoint Presentation, Santa Marta, Colombia, 13 May 2014).

<sup>153</sup> ODA 7111, "Santa Marta Colombia Jungla Out Brief" (PowerPoint Presentation, Santa Marta, Colombia, 13 May 2014), 16.

Another major development in the relationship with the Junglas during this phase was the development of their own security assistance capability. The Jungla school holds an international course, which trains foreign students from 12 countries. At the same time, the Junglas sent MTTs to work with the Mexican Federal and State police, the Panamanian Servicio Nacional de Fronteras (SENAFRONT), the Afghan National Interdiction Unit, and the Honduran National police.<sup>154</sup> The combined efforts increase the capabilities of partner nations, and increase international cooperation against TOC.

#### Partner Nation Support

The Jungla program benefitted from exceptional partner nation support throughout its 26-year history. The program was never in threat of being disbanded. The unit received constant Police organic aviation support from the ARAVI. However, at the same time the CNP receives support from Colombian Army and Air Force aviation as well. The program was not issue-free, but none of the issues over the years undermined the Jungla program nor seriously prevented it from accomplishing its mission. In the 1990s as a result of the 1996 decertification, and the focus of US security assistance on the CNP, there was jealousy between the police and the military.<sup>155</sup> Joint operations were rare in the 1990s.<sup>156</sup> The bottom line is that the Colombian government maintained its support, especially so under Presidents Álvaro Uribe Vélez and Juan Manuel Santos to continue to pursue drug trafficking, organized crime, and to maintain support to the units

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<sup>154</sup> dialogoamericas.com, “Junglas: The Narcos’ Worst Nightmare.”

<sup>155</sup> Ramsey, 158.

<sup>156</sup> Waddell, 14.

charged with those missions. Power in the Colombian government is very hierarchical and as a result the President's vision and priorities greatly impact how security programs are executed. As an example, a US Military Group Commander during Plan Colombia remarked that President Uribe's vision "cascaded down to every rank in the Police and Military."<sup>157</sup>

### Corruption

The Junglas have not had any notable issues with corruption. As discussed, the CNP as a whole suffered from extensive corruption in the 1990s. However, discretionary Presidential powers instituted in 1995 combined with the leadership of GEN Serrano eliminated the predominance of that corruption. Between 1995 and 2000, GEN Serrano dismissed approximately 8,000 officers. Favorable public opinion of the CNP increased through the 2000s.<sup>158</sup> Several factors contribute to the Junglas success with its own lack of corruption. First, the unit is a commando unit, which helps minimize exposure from the every-day temptations and contact with criminal organizations. As a commando unit, the Junglas operate as part of teams of CNP not as individuals. Next, in addition to having a high esprit de corps, the unit lives well with extra pay, better equipment, and nice bases. Additionally, candidates undergo a rigorous selection and assessment process which includes, psychological exams, medical tests, physical fitness, lifestyle analysis, and polygraphs.

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<sup>157</sup> Ramsey, 97.

<sup>158</sup> Llorente, 197.

### Duration of the Partnership

The 24-year partnership between US SF and the Junglas is one of the longest in SF history of sustained security assistance. During that time, the Junglas grew from a 50-man company to a 600-man battalion-sized force, which means that generations of CNP Junglas worked with US SF. The duration of the partnership was a major factor in the overall success of the Junglas targeting successes and capabilities. Over that time, and those generations, the US SF trainers aided in the professionalization of the unit, and the shaping of Jungla tactical culture. As a result, the trainers impacted multiple echelons of current CNP leadership, resulting in the institutionalization of change. As several US SF officers who led the security assistance programs in Colombia during this period have said, “building partner-nation capacity, which has consistently been the U.S. Government’s primary mission in Colombia, takes decades to achieve”<sup>159</sup>

### Interagency Support

Overall, US interagency support for the Jungla program worked in concert towards goals which overlapped. The overall program was funded and directed by INL, which was responsible for paying for infrastructure, vehicles, equipment, supplies, and training. While INL wanted to see the program succeed, it lacks the authorities to plan or participate in operations, which DEA can do. However, DEA only has the funding to conduct limited training and to pay sources, and is primarily focused on cases. Meanwhile, US SF worked in support of both the INL and the DEA. US SF measures success differently than both the DEA and INL, and was subject to its own set of

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<sup>159</sup> Moyar, 5.

authority limitations. Thus, although there were likely personality conflicts over the years, the fact that all three organizations worked together with the Junglas without any significant relationship-ending confrontation is important.

### Targeting of Transnational Criminal Networks

The Junglas have a record of success in targeting transnational organized crime. The GAO and US officials in Bogota regard the Junglas as one of the best national police commando units in Latin America, saying that “they are often the unit of choice in operations to destroy drug production laboratories and other narcoterrorist high-value targets, many of which are located in remote, hard-to-find locations.”<sup>160</sup> They contributed significantly to the Colombian success against the cartels in the 1990s. In 2011, DIRAN reported its elements, which include the Junglas, had killed 1,100 and arrested over 5,300 paramilitaries/BACRIM members between 2006 and 2011.<sup>161</sup> In April 2009, the Junglas and *Dirección Central de Policía Judicial e Inteligencia* (DIJIN) members captured the leader of the Urabeños, Daniel Rendón Herrera or “Don Mario.”<sup>162</sup> In December 2014, the Junglas captured the replacement leader of the Urabeños, Jorge Eliécer Ricardo Enzuncho or “Jorge Tarro” in the Antioquia Department.<sup>163</sup> In September 2012, the

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<sup>160</sup> US Government Accountability Office, *Report to The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr., Chairman Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate, Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals, Were Not Fully Met, But Security Has Improved; US Agencies Need More Detailed Plans For Reducing Assistance*, 44.

<sup>161</sup> Chalk, 19. Conviction numbers for those arrested are unavailable.

<sup>162</sup> dialogoamericas.com, “Junglas: The Narcos’ Worst Nightmare.”

<sup>163</sup> *El Colombiano*, “Policía Captura A 'Jorge Tarro' Máximo Jefe Del 'Clan Úsuga' En El Bajo Cauca,” 23 December 2014, accessed 31 March 2015,

Junglas killed the leader of the FARC-EP's 33rd Front, "Danilo García" with the support of Colombian Air Force precision bombing.<sup>164</sup> Over the years, the Junglas have also destroyed countless HCL and coca base laboratories, attacking criminal network financial resources as part of the same efforts.<sup>165</sup> In 2007, the DOS reported that the Junglas destroyed over 50 percent of all reported HCL and coca base laboratories that year.<sup>166</sup> As this is written, the Junglas are working together with another US SF trained CNP unit, the COPES, in pursuit of BACRIM targets. They are currently part of a task force hunting the Urabeños leader, Dairo Antonio Úsuga, "Otoniel."<sup>167</sup>

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<http://www.grandesmedios.com/index.php/blog-colombia/1065-policia-captura-a-jorge-tarro-maximo-jefe-del-clan-usuga-en-el-bajo-cauca>.

<sup>164</sup> Caracol Radio, "Al Menos 15 Guerrilleros Habrían Muerto En Operativo Militar En El Catatumbo," 5 September 2012, accessed 1 April 2015, <http://www.caracol.com.co/noticias/judiciales/al-menos-15-guerrilleros-habrian-muerto-en-operativo-militar-en-el-catatumbo/20120905/nota/1756120.aspx>.

<sup>165</sup> Chalk, 63.

<sup>166</sup> US Government Accountability Office, *Report to The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr., Chairman Committee on Foreign Relations, US Senate, Plan Colombia: Drug Reduction Goals, Were Not Fully Met, But Security Has Improved; US Agencies Need More Detailed Plans For Reducing Assistance*, 45. Neither Colombia nor the US know how many laboratories actually exist.

<sup>167</sup> *Semana*, "Tras Otoniel, El Nuevo Patrón Del Mal," 14 March 2015, accessed 2 April 2015, <http://www.semana.com/Imprimir/421081>. As mentioned in chapter 3, the COPES are another police unit that US SF trained. However, their targets are counterterrorism targets, such as FARC-EP leadership.

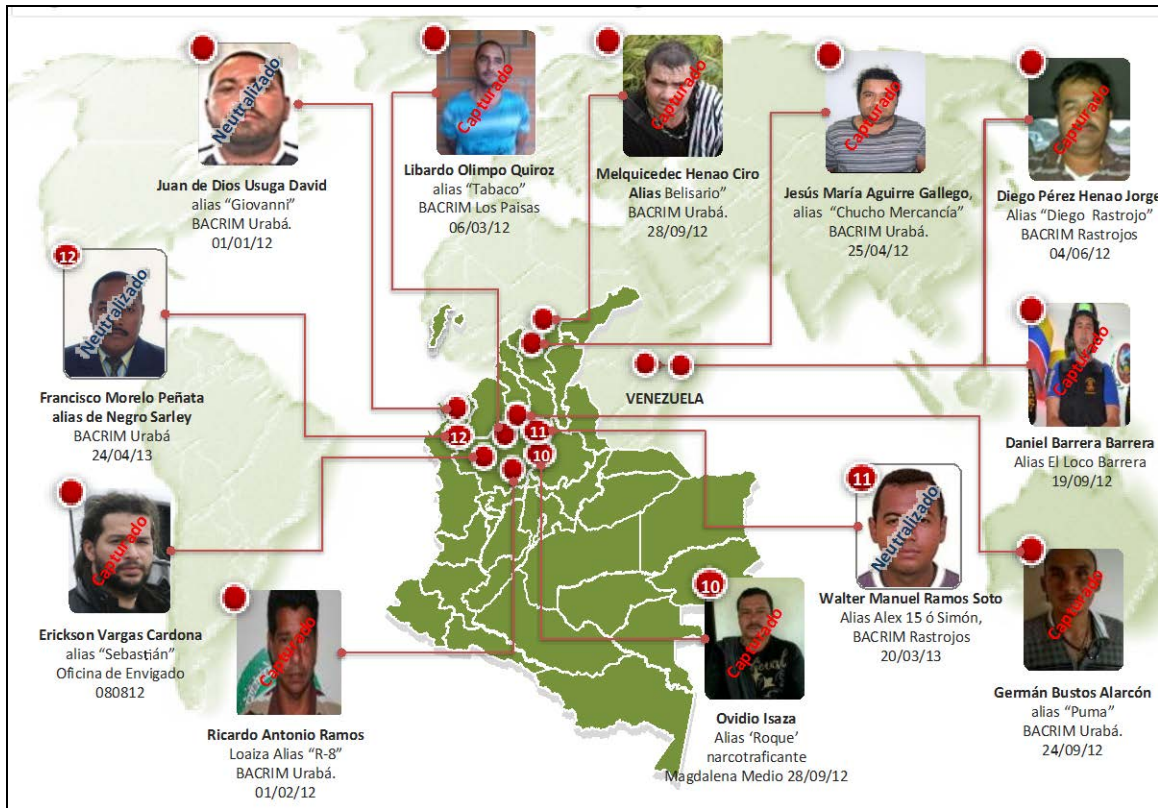


Figure 8. Successful Jungla Narcotrafficker and BACRIM Targets 2012-2014

Source: Ricardo Alberto Restrepo Londoño, "Dirección De Antinarcóticos 2015" (Bogotá Colombia: Colombian National Police, January 2015).

## Conclusions

The US SF and Jungla partnership succeeded in combatting transnational organized crime as a result of the sustained partner nation support and the extended duration of the partnership. The persistent engagement with the Junglas enabled US SF to truly build SOF human capital, and thus see a return on their training, advising, and equipping investment. This would not have been possible if the CNP and the Colombian government were not committed to Jungla efforts. Other aspects of US security assistance as part of Plan Colombia created mutually supporting effects that benefitted the Junglas

specifically the expansion and professionalization of aviation and intelligence capabilities in the Army, the Air Force and the CNP. Furthermore, INL's selection of former 7th SFG(A) officers to manage DOS support to the unit over the long term facilitated improved interagency coordination and successful SF integration into INL's efforts.

## Honduras

### Introduction

The Honduran Case examines US Special Forces efforts to train the Honduran National Police (HNP) *Toma Integral Governamental de Respuesta Especial de Seguridad* or TIGRES. This case will cover the strategic environment and its impacts on the SF training program. It will then cover the TIGRES, the US training program, and the Independent Variables described in chapter 3, followed by an analysis of the case. The case begins in 2012 and thus is the shortest and most recent case.

Table 3 presents the case finding as they relate to the dependent variable and four independent variables. The dependent variable was present, however due to the lack of organic planning and intelligence capabilities, the unit is assessed as only moderately effective at targeting criminal networks. The independent variable of a long duration partnership was not present. The partnership is only two years old. Corruption was a factor. A corruption incident occurred in the first year of the unit's operations and impacted the perception of the unit. Partner nation support is present. The partner nation developed the unit, and has shown a willingness to employ it. Interagency support is present, and best represented in the INL-DOD cooperation.

Table 3. Research Results: Honduras

Case	Dependent Variable Effectiveness Targeting TCOs	Independent Variable 1 Long Partnership Duration	Independent Variable 2 Corruption A Factor	Independent Variable 3 Partner Nation Support	Independent Variable 4 Interagency Support
Honduras	Medium	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Created by author.

### Background: Strategic Environment

Honduras faces complex security challenges with limited resources. Political turmoil, a weak economy, and a record of corruption further complicate security efforts. Burdened with debt, the economy struggled through the 1980s and 1990s. In 1996 the country transitioned to full democracy. Then in 1998, category five Hurricane Mitch struck Honduras causing \$4 billion in damage. The World Bank designated Honduras a Heavily Indebted Poor Country, and suspended its debt repayment requirements. Meanwhile in the early 2000s, cocaine trafficking routes shifted to the Central American corridor while at the same time the US deported thousands of gang members back to Honduras. The combined effect undermined Honduras's weak institutions and overwhelmed the security and judicial systems. In 2008, the homicide rate was 61.3 per 100,000.<sup>168</sup> In 2009, the Congress, Supreme Court and Army ousted populist President Manuel Zelaya in an action that set off a regional political crisis and led to the suspension of US military assistance for several years. Drug Trafficking Organizations (DTOs)

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<sup>168</sup> Mike Lanchin, "Crime Capital-Honduras Struggles To Contain Rising Murder Rate," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 12 December 2013, 4, accessed 24 January 2015, <https://janes.ihs.com/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?DocType=News&ItemId=++1595777&Pubabbrev=JIR>.

quickly shifted air and sea routes through Honduras. By 2011, 95 percent of all cocaine that entered the United States passed through the Mexico-Central American corridor.<sup>169</sup> Additionally, Mexican security force pressure against the cartels pushed illicit activities south into the Northern Triangle.<sup>170</sup> At the same time, Honduras's role as a drug trafficking way station grew with Venezuelan and Guyanese growth as export countries.<sup>171</sup> Thus by 2012, Honduras led the world with 92 per 100,000 per capita homicides, while maintaining a murder impunity rate of 85 percent.<sup>172</sup> According to the Honduran Government, 8 of every 10 of those homicides is related to drug trafficking.<sup>173</sup> The majority of Honduras' homicides are committed with one of its approximately 650,000 illegal firearms.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Liza Ten Velde, *The Northern Triangle's Drugs-Violence Nexus: The role of the drugs Trade in Criminal Violence and Policy Responses in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras* (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Transnational Institute, November 2012), 6, accessed 12 March 2014, <http://www.tni.org/sites/www.tni.org/files/download/debate19.pdf>.

<sup>170</sup> Lanchin, 3.

<sup>171</sup> Robert Evan Ellis, "Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime: 21st Century Trends" (Power Point Presentation, Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, Homestead, FL, 16 April 2014), 9.

<sup>172</sup> "Public Security Index, Central America: Honduras," *Red de Seguridad y Defensa de América Latina* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: RESDAL, 2013), 88, accessed 5 April 2015, <http://www.resdal.org/ing/libro-seg-2013/index-public-security-2013.html>.

<sup>173</sup> Marcos Ommati, "Honduras To Step Up Measures To Avoid Increase In Drug Trafficking," *Dialogo Digital Military Magazine*, 15 April 2014, accessed 10 April 2015, [http://dialogo-americas.com/en\\_GB/articles/rmisa/features/regional\\_news/2014/04/15/gen-diaz-honduras](http://dialogo-americas.com/en_GB/articles/rmisa/features/regional_news/2014/04/15/gen-diaz-honduras).

<sup>174</sup> Mark Wilson and Mike Lanchin, "Security Vacuum - Private Security Thrives In Vulnerable States," *Janes Intelligence Review*, 11 September 2014, 8, accessed 10 April 2015, <https://janes.ihs.com/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?DocType=News&ItemId=+++1721817&Pubabbrev=JIR>.



Figure 9. Map of Honduras

Source: US Central Intelligence Agency, “Honduras Shaded Relief,” University of Texas Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, 1985, accessed 3 May 2015, <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/americas/honduras.jpg>.

Honduras’s geography presents a security challenge for the government and an opportunity to the DTOs. Its long Caribbean coastline is sparsely inhabited and an ideal location for drug flights, semisubmersibles, and small boats from Colombia, Venezuela, and Guyana. In 2014, 80-90 percent of Honduras’ drug traffic entered by boat.

Furthermore, roughly 60 percent of South American drug flights land in Honduras.<sup>175</sup>

<sup>175</sup> “International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, 2015, VOL 1: Drug And Chemical Control,” Released by the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law

The DTOs use clandestine jungle landing strips along the coast in the Gracias A Dios region. The strips are easy to establish and hard to detect, presenting the traffickers numerous options. They pay farmers there up to \$50,000 per successful flight, and pay police and military commanders \$2500 to \$5000 to ensure safe passage.<sup>176</sup> Widespread poverty and extreme poverty provide countless opportunities to the DTOs. Meanwhile, Honduras also shares borders with Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador. The Pan-American Highway runs east-west through the southern portion of the country. Securing long jungle borders is an impossible task. Once drugs, people, or other illicit traffic lands in Honduras via boat or plane, it is almost impossible to track as it moves north to the US. Confined to a poor road network, the Honduran security forces lack the resources to adequately track movements throughout their country and to interdict them.

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Enforcement Affairs (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, March 2015), 191, accessed 30 March 2015, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/239560.pdf>.

<sup>176</sup> Arnson, 40.

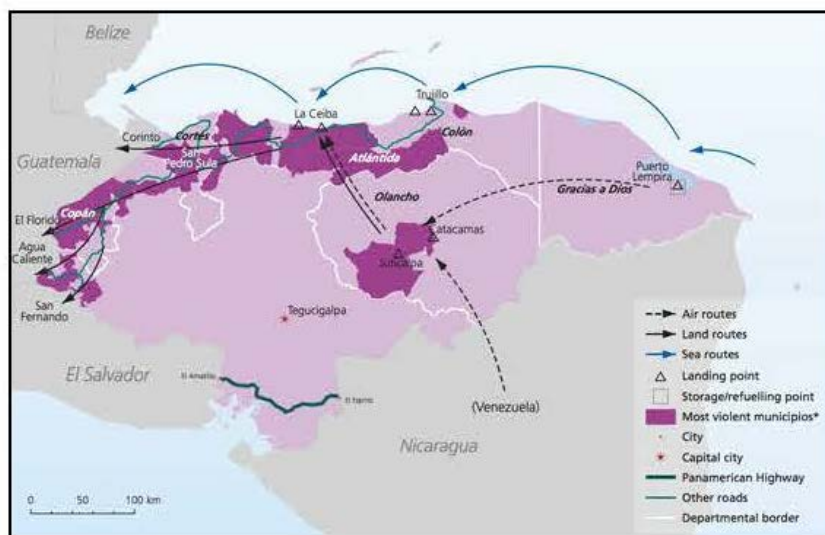


Figure 10. Honduran Cocaine Trafficking Routes and Corresponding Violence

Source: The United Nations Office On Drugs And Crime, *Transnational Organized Crime In Central America And The Caribbean: A Threat Assessment* (Vienna, Austria: United Nations Office On Drugs And Crime, September 2012), 38, accessed 3 May 2015. [http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/TOC\\_Central\\_America\\_and\\_the\\_Caribbean\\_english.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/TOC_Central_America_and_the_Caribbean_english.pdf).

Two major *transportista* (local criminal groups that specialize in smuggling) organizations had control of the networks in Honduras, the Los Cachiros in Colon and the Los Hermanos Valles in Copan.<sup>177</sup> However the larger Mexican Sinaloa and Zeta organizations also operate in Honduras. The DTOs use Honduras's gangs as security, as assassins, and as local distributors. Trafficking appears to have increased in the aftermath of the 2009 coup, during which time the US and international community diplomatically isolated the interim government.<sup>178</sup> As can be seen in the above map, the majority of

<sup>177</sup> Ellis, 17.

<sup>178</sup> Arnson, 11.

Honduras' violence occurs in the same areas where drug trafficking occurs. In 2013, Honduras suffered 10 massacres a month.<sup>179</sup> In 2014, the SOUTHCOM commander, General John F Kelly, described drug trafficking's impact on Honduras, saying it "has essentially destroyed most of the institutions of the government."<sup>180</sup>

Honduras' other security threat comes from the *maras* or gangs. According to the World Bank, an estimated 36,000 members comprise 112 gangs in Honduras.<sup>181</sup> The two principal gangs are the *Mara Salvatrucha* or MS-13 and *Mara or Pandilla 18* or the M-18. The US Treasury Department designated MS-13 as a Transnational Criminal Organization in 2012. The gangs originated out of Central America's civil wars, immigrant communities in the US, a youth bulge, and a lack of economic opportunity. Previously focused on low-level urban crime, they have branched out to all forms of criminal activity to include human trafficking, kidnapping, and extortion. They tax human trafficking, and are an additional reason for the mass migration of Central Americans to the US. The lack of viable jobs in Honduras, combined with the threat of social violence causes Honduran youth to choose between emigrating or joining a gang. Gangs in Honduras are responsible for \$59 million in extortion each year. The larger gangs such as MS-13 are evolving, with new members penetrating the government and

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<sup>179</sup> Ellis, 9.

<sup>180</sup> Jim Dorschner, "Beyond 'Mano Dura': Securing Central America's Borderlands," *Janes Defence Weekly*, 21 May 2014, 9, accessed 9 April 2015, <https://janes.ihs.com/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?DocType=News&ItemId=++1712062&Pubabbrev=JDW>.

<sup>181</sup> "Crime and Violence in Central America," 21.

the police.<sup>182</sup> In 2013, Honduras' MS-13 and M-18 gangs attempted a truce similar to the one brokered in El Salvador, but failed to lower crime levels due their decentralized nature.<sup>183</sup> The gangs are rooted in Honduran society.

Policing Honduras is a major challenge. The threat to policemen and their families posed by the DTOs and gangs places police in a difficult position. Most policemen live within the neighborhoods the gangs control, and gangs have consistently demonstrated their ruthlessness by torturing and killing family members. The Honduran judicial system results in high impunity rates, so even if police arrest criminals, the criminals will likely be back on the streets. The prison system is overcrowded and vulnerable as well. MS-13 and M-18 run operations from prison. It is estimated that almost 40 percent of Honduran police are working with organized crime.<sup>184</sup> In June 2013, Security Minister Arturo Corrales suspended 1,400 Criminal Investigation Unit (DNIC) officers.<sup>185</sup> Then in 2014, the HNP dismissed 900 of its 7000 police officers.<sup>186</sup> Meanwhile, the country has 160,000 private security personnel, with an 8-15 percent

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<sup>182</sup> Ellis, 9.

<sup>183</sup> James Bargent, "Murders In Honduras Rising Despite Gang Truce," *InSight Crime*, 5 August 2013, accessed 7 April 2015, <http://www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/murders-in-honduras-rising-despite-gang-truce>.

<sup>184</sup> Ellis, 17.

<sup>185</sup> Robert Shaw, "Honduras Establishes Elite 'Tigers' Police Unit to Fight Urban Violence," *Dialogo Digital Military Magazine*, 8 July 2013, accessed 4 April 2015, [http://dialogoamericas.com/en\\_GB/articles/rmisa/features/regional\\_news/2013/07/08/honduras-violence](http://dialogoamericas.com/en_GB/articles/rmisa/features/regional_news/2013/07/08/honduras-violence).

<sup>186</sup> "International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, 2015, VOL 1: Drug And Chemical Control," 191.

annual growth rate.<sup>187</sup> The HNP is too small to adequately police the population. The country has 142 officers per 100,000 citizens compared to Latin Americas average of 268 per 100,000.<sup>188</sup>

Faced with these challenges, the Honduran government continues to work towards stabilizing the security situation. It adopted controversial *mano dura* (strong hand) policies towards crime, which equate tough punitive sentences. The government has deployed military forces to police cities, approved an aerial exclusion zone enforced with shoot-down authorities, expanded and began purging the HNP, and created a special police unit (TIGRES) to target criminal organizations and leadership. In 2010, President Lobo deployed soldiers in Honduras's major urban areas. In 2013, the government created a military unit with the 5000-man *Policía Militar de Orden Público* (Public Order Military Police or PMOP). President Hernandez' security policy focuses on: crime prevention, targeting criminal organizations, reforming public security and judicial institutions, and protecting human rights.<sup>189</sup> During his January 2014 inauguration, the president announced the launch of Operation Morazán, and his intent to continue to employ *mano dura* policies to achieve his security strategy. Operation Morazán combined the employment of the TIGREs and the MPOP to target TCOs in Honduras.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Wilson, 3.

<sup>188</sup> Aaron Korthuis, "The Central America Regional Security Initiative in Honduras," Woodrow Wilson Institute, September 2014, 11, accessed 7 April 2015, <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/CARSI%20in%20Honduras.pdf>.

<sup>189</sup> "International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, 2015, VOL 1: Drug and Chemical Control," 191.

<sup>190</sup> Michael Lohmuller, "Soldiers on Honduras Streets Provide Preview of Security Strategy," *InSight Crime*, 28 January 2014, accessed 4 April 2015,

In support of the human rights line of effort, President Hernandez invited the UN to open an office of the UN High Commission on Human Rights in Honduras.<sup>191</sup> 2014 crime data showed possible security progress. The number of drug flights from South America landing in Honduras declined 10 percent. Further, the national homicide rate declined from 75 (2013) to 65 per 100,000 in 2014.<sup>192</sup>

US security assistance to Honduras has evolved as the security situation has steadily deteriorated. The US first established the Mérida Initiative with Mexico and in 2008 expanded it to provide \$65 million in security assistance. Mérida evolved into the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI), which included \$361 million in US assistance for 2008-2010 and an additional \$100 million in 2012. CARSI's Principal Goals in Central America are:

1. Create safe streets for the citizens of the region
2. Disrupt the movement of criminals and contraband to, within, and between the nations of Central America;
3. Support the development of strong, capable, and accountable Central American governments
4. Re-establish effective state presence, services and security in communities at risk

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<http://www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/new-honduras-president-sends-soldiers-to-streets-in-opening-security-move>.

<sup>191</sup> John F. Kelly, *Posture Statement of General John F. Kelly, United States Marine Corps, Commander, United States Southern Command*, 114th Congress Senate Armed Service Committee. 12 March 2015, 16, accessed 10 April 2015, [http://www.southcom.mil/newsroom/Documents/SOUTHCOM\\_POSTURE\\_STATEMENT\\_FINAL\\_2015.pdf](http://www.southcom.mil/newsroom/Documents/SOUTHCOM_POSTURE_STATEMENT_FINAL_2015.pdf).

<sup>192</sup> "International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, 2015, VOL 1: Drug and Chemical Control," 191.

5. Foster enhanced levels of coordination and cooperation between the nations of the region, other international partners, and donors to combat regional security threats.<sup>193</sup>

US agencies have established numerous vetted units to accomplish these goals. The INL builds police capacity, providing the Honduran national and community police training and equipment with a focus on kidnapping, extortion, and antigang cases.<sup>194</sup> In 2012, the US initiated Operation Martillo, a multinational maritime-based drug detection and interdiction program with the US Navy and Coast Guard in the Caribbean Sea. Honduras hosts Joint Task Force Bravo at Soto Cano Air Base (Palmerola Air Base). The C5-capable base houses a company of US U60 Blackhawk helicopters and the US Special Forces Advanced Operating Base (AOB) for Central America. The US additionally provided Honduras ground radar-based intelligence to facilitate the interception of drug boats and aircraft until Honduras began shooting down drug planes.<sup>195</sup> In 2013, the US and Colombian governments assisted the Honduran government in developing a police reform plan.<sup>196</sup> At the same time, the US and Colombia began training the new Honduran TIGRES unit.

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<sup>193</sup> US Department of State, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, “The Central America Regional Security Initiative: A Shared Partnership,” March 5, 2014, accessed 10 April 2015, <http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rls/fs/2014/223804.htm>.

<sup>194</sup> “International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, 2015, VOL 1: Drug And Chemical Control,” 194.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

## TIGRES: Concept Development

The creation of the TIGRES achieved political and security ends. In 2013, President Porfirio Lobo and the Congress developed the idea for the new special operations national police unit. The government publicized the unit and its intended capabilities to communicate Honduran security efforts. Planned capabilities varied from attacking criminal organizations to working closely with local police. As part of the discussion, President Hernandez reassured the established defense establishment, explaining the unit would not create new competing institutions.<sup>197</sup> The TIGRES fall under the Ministry of Security. Early in planning, Honduras identified Chile's *Carabineros* as potential trainers. GEN René Osorio Canales, commander of the Honduran Armed Forces, explained in 2013 the desire to focus the unit's operations on the two major urban areas and then expand to pursue targets in more rural areas. Composed of specially trained policemen, the TIGRES would act as a quick reaction force, supporting San Pedro Sula, Honduras' economic center and murder capital, and Tegucigalpa, the national capital.<sup>198</sup> In June 2013, the Honduran Congress established the TIGRES.<sup>199</sup>

The Honduran government contended with several issues in forming the TIGRES. First, Honduras already had a special police unit called the *Comando de Operaciones*

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<sup>197</sup> Thelma Mejía, "Honduran President Puts "Tigers" On The Streets," *Inter Press Service News*, 7 August 2012, accessed 4 April 2015, <http://www.ipsnews.net/2012/08/honduran-president-puts-tigers-on-the-streets/>.

<sup>198</sup> *El Herald*, "Se Gradúa Primer Grupo De TIGRES En Honduras," 19 June 2014, accessed 4 April 2015, <http://www.elheraldo.hn/inicio/721197-213/se-grad%C3%BAa-primer-grupo-de-tigres-en-honduras>.

<sup>199</sup> Shaw.

*Especiales* (COBRAS), formed in 1982. US Police Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) units trained the COBRAS.<sup>200</sup> However, the COBRAS now have a record of human rights violations and corruption, and they participated in the 2009 coup.<sup>201</sup> In two incidents in 2007 and 2011, the COBRAS reported the loss or theft of a total of over 500 small arms and over 300,000 rounds of ammunition.<sup>202</sup> Rather than attempting to reform or expand the COBRAS, Honduras decided to create an entirely new unit. The US Leahy vetting law likely influenced this decision. The US cannot provide security assistance to a unit with a record of human rights violations. Another consideration in training a new special operations police unit is Honduras' legacy of security force death squads and human rights violations. As recently as 2005 members of the "Red Car Gang" murdered young gang members.<sup>203</sup> Part of the initial publicity effort worked to address these human rights and death squad concerns. The Honduran Congress assured the press that the new unit would receive extensive human rights training to prevent any accusations of violations.

As part of CARSI and US assistance to Honduras, INL committed to working with the Hondurans to train and assist the TIGRES. This commitment combined with INL's decision to hire the same retired SF COL who managed the Junglas as the INL

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Human Rights Watch, "After the Coup: Ongoing Violence, Intimidation, and Impunity in Honduras," 2010, 15, accessed 11 April 2015, [http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/honduras1210webwcover\\_0.pdf](http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/honduras1210webwcover_0.pdf).

<sup>202</sup> Andrew O'Reilly, "Honduras Police Loses a Large Cache of Weapons," *Fox News Latino*, 31 October 2011, accessed 12 April 2015, <http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/news/2011/10/31/honduras-loses-large-cache-weapons-from-police-warehouse/>.

<sup>203</sup> Mejía.

TIGRES lead proved critical to the TIGRES program. As in Colombia, the program manager brought with him decades of experience, an extensive personal network, and a record of performance from Colombia. The original plan to use the Chilean police to train the TIGRES evolved into US SF from 7th SFG(A) and Colombian Junglas. SOCSOUTH, INL, the Colombian Government and the Honduran Government coordinated to create a combined training team.

### TIGRES Organization

The TIGRES mission is to “integrate the government institutions, by conducting focused operations and neutralizing the activities of criminal organizations that are negatively impacting public order, peaceful coexistence, and citizen security.” The commander of the TIGRES, SubComisionado Wilmer Suazo Aguilera reports directly to the director of the HNP, General Felix Villanueva, and works with special prosecutors, judges, and the Honduran intelligence services in order to ensure that criminals the unit arrests are processed through a functioning system. In this way, the TIGRES bypass many of the difficulties the greater Honduran judicial system faces, while still providing due process and providing for the human rights of the criminals. The original plan as described in the law was to build one 300-officer squadron. Due to the TIGRES success in the field, the Secretary of Security, GEN (Ret) Pacheco has directed that the TIGRES build towards a 500-man unit by June 2016. The squadron is divided into three departments: investigations, intelligence, and operations.<sup>204</sup> The investigations and

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<sup>204</sup> Juan Carlos Bonilla Valladares, “Toma Integral Gubernamental de Respuesta Especial de Seguridad TIGRES (Ley 103-2013)” (Power Point Presentation, DIGEN Honduran National Police, October 2013), 4.

intelligence departments will together have 78 personnel. The operations department will have 216. Though currently operational, the force is still under development and in training. Trainers built the operations department first, which is able to support other existing units and leverage intelligence from existing Honduran agencies. At the same time, the TIGRES will establish liaisons with local police departments to facilitate coordination but avoid corruption and compromise.

The Honduran Government established initial recruiting requirements for the TIGRES to prevent corruption and to provide a more effective force. TIGRES members must have graduated from high school, have baccalaureate, or be a commercial expert or teacher. They have to meet a minimum height standard (men: 5.5ft and women: 5.2ft), have no tattoos, and have no criminal record. They additionally must be at least 23 years old.<sup>205</sup> The unit is mixed gender, and already has several female officers. Candidates who meet initial requirements also must pass a physical fitness test and a psychological exam. Additionally, all TIGRES must pass US Leahy vetting. Thus, although Junglas are training the TIGRES with the US, the INL and US SF trainers ensure that all training adheres to US legal requirements and standards.

### TIGRES Training

The first 181 TIGRES officers began training in April 2014 and graduated in June 2014. A 12-man US SF ODA from 7th SFG(A) and 10-11 Colombian Junglas began 5-6 month training rotations. The TIGRES train at a camp in Lepaterique, Francisco Morazán

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<sup>205</sup> *La Prensa*, “Expertos de EUA y Colombia Preparan A Policías Tigres de Honduras,” 7 April 2014, accessed 4 April 2015, <http://www.laprensa.hn/honduras/tegucigalpa/638822-98/expertos-de-eua-y-colombia-preparan-a-polic%C3%ADas-tigres-de-honduras>.

Department, 40km west of Tegucigalpa.<sup>206</sup> During the 12-week course, Jungla instructors with US assistance train TIGRES members in human rights, rural and urban small unit tactics, jungle survival, air assault operations, land navigation, advanced marksmanship, mission planning and leadership.<sup>207</sup> The first TIGRES graduated the basic TIGRES course in June and have since received two separate advanced training blocks.<sup>208</sup> This training plan enabled the Honduran Ministry of Security to employ a sizable TIGRES force soon after graduation, and it enabled their Colombian and US trainers to institute a training and operations rotation. With a current planned end strength of 300, with 200 operators, the TIGRES are already almost 100 percent full, which enables the trainers to focus on advanced skills and collective training based off of operational requirements. Additionally, just as other SOF units and police units send individuals to advanced training, the TIGRES sent four TIGRES qualified officers to Colombia for the Junglas course from July-December 2014 and to other special skills courses in Honduras to build the units human capital and capacity.<sup>209</sup>

Beginning in February 2015, INL and 7th SFG(A) began its first training rotation on the 7th SFG(A) Compound on Eglin Air Force Base in North West Florida in the United States. INL transported a TIGRES unit to Eglin in order to conduct two weeks of

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<sup>206</sup> *La Prensa*, 7 April 2014.

<sup>207</sup> US Embassy Tegucigalpa, “Ambassador Kubiske Congratulates 200 New TIGRES,” Press Release, 19 June 2015, accessed 4 April 2015, <http://honduras.usembassy.gov/pr-061914-eng.html>.

<sup>208</sup> US Embassy Tegucigalpa, 19 June 2015; ODA 7323 “Horario De Entrenamiento Para TIGRES, Honduras (Alfa, Bravo y Charlie),” Lepaterique, Francisco Morazán Department, Honduras, 2015.

<sup>209</sup> Bonilla, October 2013, 12.

advanced urban movement, close quarters combat, and advanced marksmanship techniques. The compound offers the TIGRES the ability to train collective tasks on 7th SFG(A)'s new range complexes, which include a sophisticated shoot house, a multiple building complex range, multiple firing ranges, and large secure forested maneuver areas. Training focused on improving the TIGRES collective tasks, specifically intelligence-driven raids.<sup>210</sup> The rotation of TIGRES to the US compound additionally provides 7th SFG(A) trainers a chance to build continuity as they rotate back and forth to Honduras. Incoming ODAs are able to meet the units they will train prior to deploying to Honduras, enabling them to establish critical relationships in a tough training environment.

### TIGRES Operations

The TIGRES currently operate as part of the *Fuerza de Seguridad Interinstitucional Nacional* or National Security Inter-institutional Force (FUSINA) Task Force under the blanket security Operation Morazán. The FUSINA Task Force includes the MPOP, the TIGRES, the COBRAS, the different military services, and other national-level security agencies. The FUSINA command fuses intelligence and operations and then uses the TIGRES, COBRAS, and MPOP to execute missions. The US SOUTHCOM supports Operation Morazán on land and at sea.<sup>211</sup> Thus, within the current operational

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<sup>210</sup> Thomas Cieslak, "SF Soldiers Train Honduran Counter-Narcotic, Counter-Trafficking Force," US Army Special Operations Command Press Release No. 150304-01, 4 March 2015, accessed 4 April 2015, <http://www.soc.mil/UNS/Releases/2015/March/150304-01/150304-01.html>.

<sup>211</sup> Michael Wimbish, "SOUTHCOM Commander Reaffirms US Military Support To Honduran Fight Against Traffickers, Organized Crime," US SOUTHCOM Press Release, 4 June 2014, accessed 12 April 2015, <http://www.southcom.mil/newsroom/Pages/Gen--Kelly-visits-Honduras.aspx>.

paradigm, the TIGRES operate as part of a joint interagency task force, not as a unilateral force.

Since becoming operationally capable in 2014, the TIGRES have conducted a number of operations against HVTs, criminals, and in support of other FUSINA missions. In October 2014, the TIGRES helped arrest Arnulfo Valle Valle and Luis Alonso Valle Valle, the leaders of one of Central America's biggest DTOs. In March 2015, the TIGRES participated in a FUSINA operation, arresting Jose Miguel "Chepe" Handal Pérez, another Honduran HVT who coordinated drug shipments off of his lands in eastern Honduras for the Sinaloa and Zeta organizations.<sup>212</sup> In addition to HVTs, the TIGRES supported the COBRAS and PMOP in putting down gang-led prison riots in February and March 2015.<sup>213</sup> In other operations in March 2015, the TIGRES conducted a joint operation with the MPOP in San Pedro de Sula arresting 10 gang members and another operation arresting drug traffickers.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> *El Herald*, "Honduras: Detención Judicial A 'Chepe' Handal," 14 March 2015, accessed 2 April 2015, <http://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/822116-219/honduras-detenci%C3%B3n-judicial-a-chepe-handal>.

<sup>213</sup> *El Herald*, "Menores infractores se amotinan en los Cobras," 6 February 2015, accessed 2 April 2015, <http://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/792568-219/menoresinfractores-se-amotinan-en-los-cobras>; *El Herald*, "Honduras: Fusina Recupera El Control De La Penitenciaría Nacional Tras Amotinamiento," 9 March 2015, accessed 2 April 2015, <http://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/820617-219/honduras-fusina-recupera-el-control-de-la-penitenciar%C3%ADa-nacional-tras-amotinamiento>.

<sup>214</sup> *El Herald*, "Honduras: Duros Golpes A La Delincuencia En Fuertes Operativos Combinados," 5 March 2015, accessed 2 April 2015, <http://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/817340-219/honduras-duros-golpes-a-la-delincuencia-en-fuertes-operativos-combinados>; *El Herald*, "En Operativo Capturan A Dos Personas En La Colonia Nueva Suyapa," 22 March 2015, accessed 2 April 2015, <http://www.elheraldo.hn/sucesos/824824-219/en-operativo-capturan-a-dos-personas-en-la-colonia-nueva-suyapa>.

The TIGRES face a couple of operational limitations, which limit their autonomy as a force. They lack organic or direct air support. If aircraft are required, they depend upon other organizations. The other main operational challenge is that the TIGRES have not developed their own intelligence and investigations sections yet, and so again they depend on other organizations. As a result, the current force acts as an action force for other organizations' targets. This is not necessarily a bad thing because it takes time to develop those capabilities, and the operational force can gain experience, confidence, and publicity during their development. However, it does limit the targeting process and initiative of the unit. Basically, the TIGRES have to wait for someone to call them. They lack the ability to develop and execute their own targets independently. In a country with very high rates of corruption across organizations, the near-term effect may limit the units ability to accomplish its mission of targeting criminal organizations.

As part of the evolution of the US SF training mission with the TIGRES, the training ODA has established an OST with the TIGRES to train and assist the TIGRE leadership in its mission planning. The two-man OST, led by the Detachment Commander work with TIGRE leadership at their forward planning locations to help the leadership as they develop their tactical plans. Within the TIGRES role as one component of the FUSINA force, the TIGRES and the OST are limited to tactical-level planning.

#### Duration of Partnership

The short duration of the partnership in the TIGRE is the limiting factor in how effective the TIGRES have been. US SF and Colombian Junglas started partnering with the TIGRES in early 2014. The partnership is only four consecutive 6-month rotations old. While the US and Colombian trainers have made great progress, the relationship will

need more time to mature and help develop the organization and its capabilities. The TIGRES currently have basic capabilities, which will increase as the unit develops its intelligence and investigative components.

### Corruption

Following the arrest of the Valle brothers in October 2014, the HNP investigated 50 members of the TIGRES for stealing \$1.3 million from a \$12.5 million seizure in October 2014. The US extradited the Valles in December 2014.<sup>215</sup> However, several members of the Police immediately bought property in the months that followed. The corruption case generated several articles and attention in the Honduran press. There have been no other cases of corruption since the 2014 case. As part of the plan to prevent corruption TIGRES members are supposed to receive healthcare and a 30 percent increase over the normal HNP salary.<sup>216</sup> The Valle case highlights the challenge of changing police culture in the middle of a security and police corruption crisis. Although there have not been other known cases of corruption since, the one incident impacts the perception of the unit and its integration into operations. The TIGRES will have to establish a track record in order to overcome the initial case. Considering those issues, corruption in the unit has not compromised its ability to target transnational organized crime.

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<sup>215</sup> The New York Times, “Honduras: Police at U.S. Embassy Are Suspended Over Missing Money,” 17 February 2015, accessed 4 April 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/17/world/americas/honduras-police-at-usembassy-are-suspended-over-missing-money.html?ref=topics>.

<sup>216</sup> Shaw.

### Partner Nation Support

Honduran support for establishment and operation of the TIGRES has been very good. Both US SOUTHCOM and the INL have shown public support and published positive reports about Honduran efforts to counter transnational organized crime.<sup>217</sup> The Hondurans originated the idea for the unit and welcomed the US and Colombia to participate and support it. President Hernandez visited the trainers when they began training the first class of TIGRES. He further attended the graduation of that class along with the Minister of Security and the Director of the National Police. If there were issues with partner nation support they would likely occur between the military and the HNP. However, perhaps with the intent to prevent a conflict or to improve coordination, President Hernandez appointed General (Ret) Julian Pacheco Tinoco, a Military Intelligence Officer, to lead the Ministry of Security in December 2014.<sup>218</sup>

### Interagency Support

US Interagency support to the TIGRES program and to US C-TOC efforts in Honduras have also been very good. As US security assistance efforts in Honduras have ramped up, there has been an increase in US interagency personnel with security assistance backgrounds. The selection of the Jungla INL program lead to run the INL program led this interagency support. The U.S. Ambassador to Honduras, Lisa Kubiske, supported the new TIGRES program by attending training and personally congratulating

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<sup>217</sup> “International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, 2015, VOL 1: Drug And Chemical Control,” 195.

<sup>218</sup> Gustavo Palencia, “Honduras Breaks Tradition, Names General As Security Minister,” *Reuters*, 15 December 2014, accessed 2 April 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/16/us-honduras-security-idUSKBN0JU09620141216>.

the new graduates at their graduation ceremony.<sup>219</sup> Ambassador Kubiske's replacement Ambassador James Nealon came from working as the Civilian Deputy to the SOUTHCOM Commander, which further strengthened strong DOD and DOS relationships in Honduras. Ambassador Nealon has shown support through his twitter account congratulating the FUSINA and Honduran government on successive arrests of top Honduran criminals.<sup>220</sup> At the same time, SOCSOUTH and 7th SFG(A) have supported by providing US-based training, by allocating an ODA to the TIGRES in constant rotation, and by deploying a 3rd BN, 7th SFG(A) AOB (an active duty unit) to Soto Cano, Honduras.

#### Targeting of Transnational Criminal Networks

The TIGRES are targeting transnational criminal networks as part of FUSINA and Operation Morazán. As a new unit, still under development, the TIGRES have made effective contributions in their arrest operations. They are not independently attacking networks through successive intelligence-based operations. They are however attacking networks as part of the larger FUSINA Task Force. Honduras' multiple high-profile arrests and extraditions in 2014 and 2015 have demonstrated the government's resolve to pursue criminal leadership such as the Valle brothers or "Chepe" Handal, who recently ran for Congress.

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<sup>219</sup> US Embassy Tegucigalpa, 19 June 2015.

<sup>220</sup> James D. Nealon, US Ambassador HN, Twitter Post, 13 March 2015, 10:21 a.m, accessed 5 April 2015, <https://twitter.com/usambhonduras>.

## Conclusions

The US SF, Colombian Jungla, and Honduran TIGRES partnership is currently a success. Although it is still in its early stages, and has had one set back with corruption, the program receives high levels of US and partner nation interagency and political support. Long-term program management through the experienced INL TIGRES manager will ensure continuity as US SF ODAs continue to support the INL program. The constant rotation of Jungla trainers will continue to build the capacity of all three groups. The Jungla provide Latin American police experience in similar environments against similar threats. The US ODA provides its own level of expertise and experience from the Middle East. Likely the greatest challenge the program will face going forward is developing its investigative and intelligence branches and preventing corruption from tainting the unit.

## Analysis

Table 4. Research Results and Comparison: Bolivia, Colombia, Honduras

Case	Dependent Variable Effectiveness Targeting TCOs	Independent Variable 1 Long Partnership Duration	Independent Variable 2 Corruption A Factor	Independent Variable 3 Partner Nation Support	Independent Variable 4 Interagency Support
Bolivia	Low	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colombia	High	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Honduras	Medium	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Source:* Created by author.

The primary research question for this study is: Why are some US SF partnerships with Latin American MOI units effective at countering transnational organized crime? Within these cases the most important variable was the duration of the partnership. The length of the partnership impacted how well units were able to progress. The SF trainers trained all of the units to a level in which the unit could execute operations against TCOs. It is important to differentiate between the three. Only in the Colombian case did the unit continuously execute its own operations against criminal networks. In Bolivia, the UMOPAR depended on DEA and DOD to lead, plan, and support operations. In Honduras, the unit is still does not possess its own intelligence, investigative, or planning capabilities. The TIGRES depend on higher headquarters; nonetheless, with high levels of partner nation support, the Hondurans are executing unilateral operations. This contrasts with the Bolivian case, where the resources were more developed, but the operational level desire and support, combined with corruption and the police-military rivalry undermined efforts. Furthermore, only in the Colombian case were the trainers able to develop higher level planning, intelligence gathering, and targeting capabilities. The reason for this is that building human capital and institutions takes persistent engagement. In Colombia, sustained rotations of SF trainers with the same relatively small group of Junglas enabled the Junglas and their leadership to get progressively better.

### Secondary Research Questions

What are US objectives in partnering with national police units?

In each case, US SF built partner unit capacity to combat criminal threats in the partner nation. The two main objectives are to enable partners to secure themselves and to defeat criminal networks. In Bolivia, efforts focused on supply reduction through the destruction of labs, aircraft, and the arrest of the traffickers. In Colombia, efforts focused on labs, leadership, and networks. In Honduras, efforts focus on leadership and networks.

Under what conditions do SF partner with national police units?

SF partner with MOI units during periods that the US considers the partner nation a regional security priority. The US initiated its partnership in Bolivia in the 1980s and early 1990s because it hoped to cut cocaine supply and resolve its domestic demand through UMOPAR operations. At the time, US SF were the only logical group of trainers to train a police or military force to conduct long range jungle operations. Colombia has been a security priority from the late 1980s until today as a result of cartel and insurgent security threats. It is further a priority because it has been a top cocaine producing country. The US partnership in Honduras fits the same paradigm. TCOs and gangs in Honduras threatened to overwhelm the country's security institutions. In each case, the SF partnership acted as one component of greater US stability efforts.

How do SOF improve national police capacity to counter the current threats?

SF improve MOI capacity through persistent engagement and in each of these cases, SF maintained a persistent relationship through constant rotations. These rotations

aided in cultural shifts within the police institutions they were working with. The longer the relationship, the greater the improvement. SF aid in the selection and training of paramilitary units. They provide training in weapons, medical skills, communication, tactics, and targeting. SF bring experience in the sequencing and execution of operations to achieve desired effects. Furthermore, SF add to the interagency intelligence capacity. The integration of SF at the unit level and at the operational level enabled DOD to tie in intelligence collection platforms and integrated interagency support to fuse operations and intelligence. The combination of OSTs and training teams enable SF to create a positive feedback loop where intelligence drives operations, and operations drive training requirements. In Colombia, this persistent engagement produced increased operational results over time and institutional change. All of these impacts support INL, DEA, FBI, and DHS objectives and enable those agencies to better execute their missions. OSTs working directly with the other agencies are able to leverage DOD assets in support of interagency objectives, which ultimately meet SOUTHCOM objectives in defeating the threat networks.

### Conclusions

Continuous Special Forces engagement with the same national police units over an extended number of years helped develop police units capable of targeting transnational organized crime. In Colombia, where the partnership was the longest, the SF engagement created cultural and institutional impacts that spilled over into the CNP and has since impacted other partners in the region as Colombia began training international students and units, such as in Honduras. The other key takeaway is that the partner nation must have the desire to make the partnerships work. In Bolivia, US

economic and security assistance provided motivation to support and participate in programs, but not the desire to truly change the country. Bolivians viewed counterdrug efforts as a US policy versus having the desire to fully embrace efforts against criminal networks. In Honduras, violence appears to have triggered a government and citizen desire to move forward as happened in Colombia. That desire makes an important difference in how elite national police units are supported and what they do. The Honduran FUSINA, under which the TIGRES fall is conducting unilateral operations against criminal networks.

## CHAPTER 5

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

This chapter presents recommendations based on the previous chapters' findings. These findings fall into three categories: security assistance policy, program design, and Special Forces best practices. Security assistance policy addresses the concept of using Special Forces or Special Operations Forces to train national police units. The program design section addresses how to set these partnerships up successfully at the interagency bilateral level. The SF best practices section addresses ODA and AOB level best practices that make partnerships more successful.

#### Security Assistance Policy Recommendations

Using US Special Forces to train national police units in Latin America is controversial. Human rights advocates and others frame military forces training police as a militarization of the police. The militarization label is enough to cancel an initiative before it starts. DOS and INL have a series of other options that they could exercise to accomplish similar objectives, such as US Border Patrol's BORTAC, DEA's FAST Teams, and contract companies such as DynCorp. Just as SF bring capabilities to the table, so do these agency and contractor groups, which INL and DOS can mix and match over time to cover all necessary training. The rise of modern security contracting companies, which employ or subcontract ex-military or ex-police to train, presents DOS capabilities similar to the military, but without the connotation of militarization.

Consequently, these options lead to the question of why SF? Why assume the risk of bad press and permanent labels of militarization?

Special Forces should not be used to broadly train national police forces.

However, within the specific case of special national police units designated with the mission to counter transnational organized crime, SF are the best element to use. US SF, more than other trainers available to INL and the DOS, has the capability, experience, and authorities to leverage DOD assets, and integrate them into training and targeting in support of interagency objectives. Contractors can provide training but cannot integrate training into operations. They cannot access DOD intelligence, aviation, logistics or reach back. BORTAC and FAST teams can train and advise in operations, but lack the personnel to conduct persistent engagement, which this research has identified as being key to successful training and targeting. SF builds human capital and relationships, and integrates them into interagency operations in a supporting role. Further, SF and SOF think with a campaign mindset rather than an investigation mindset. Each part of a plan fits into an operational design. Missions and targets attack criticality and build upon each other to produce mutually supporting effects. Persistent SF engagement transforms unit and leadership culture, which ensures more permanent change. No other trainers possess these combined capabilities.

There is a great deal of overlap between the capabilities required to combat Latin Americas powerful TCOs and terrorism. Both can be considered national security missions. During a crisis, these are the units that the US would likely interact with, which means developing strong relationships and interoperability is important to US national security and the partner nation's national security. These forces constitute SOCOM's

concept of the Global SOF Network. In Latin America, like in the US the forces that have the authorities to operate internally are the National Police and MOI units, which makes them ideal partners for US SOF. Thus, in building the Global SOF network, rather than building mini-SOCOMs and JSOCs that lack the necessary authorities to operate in their countries, it makes sense to build police units that can defeat internal threats, and with whom the US can work with in a time of crisis.

Recommendation 1: US SOUTHCOM and INL should consider establishing a formalized agreement to capture the success of these partnerships for future programs.

Recommendation 2: US SOUTHCOM and SOCSOUTH should establish a competition in parallel to Fuerzas Commando (the AOR CT competition) for only national police units in order to encourage police unit capacity building and security cooperation.

Recommendation 3: SOCSOUTH should focus its Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCETs) and Counter-Narcoterrorism (CNT) training on partnering with national police units with which DEA and INL are working with. These are the units with authorities to target criminal networks within their countries, and they already have US intelligence and program support from interagency partners.

### Program Design Recommendations

Looking at the next level down, at the partner nation police force, there are a few key lessons on what organizational designs lead to better outcomes. How a country organizes its police force, such as the design of the chain of command, the composition, and its supporting elements is a sovereign decision. However, in the initial formulation of the unit, there is sometimes an opportunity to influence design outcomes. This was the

case in Bolivia and Colombia, and maybe Honduras. In Bolivia, the US created the Red Devils and the Blue Devils. In Colombia, the US helped build the CNP aviation branch. In each case, simpler designs resulted in better outcomes. For example bringing the Bolivian Air Force and Navy in to support the police reduced the effectiveness of the police because of preexisting rivalries. In Colombia, the Junglas had their own aviation support, which prevented them from being dependent upon another organization. Creating relatively small units with organic transportation assets upfront prevents mission compromise, increases the speed at which units can train to a higher level, and ensures that assets are available when they need to be. This approach also keeps US procurement and training costs lower, as the US does not need to equip an army aviation battalion, a navy boat squadron, etc.

Recommendation 4: When possible, influence organizational design to create smaller units with clear and short chains of command, organic intelligence, aviation, ground, and maritime transportation support, and the appropriate authorities to complete their mission.

#### Special Forces Best Practices

The use of the SF OST is not a new idea. It is a practical response to the problem of how best to advise and assist in FID. SF ODAs are designed to conduct split team operations in which a 12-man ODA could split into 2, 3, or 4 teams. While not always possible, the use of OSTs in Colombia to create an operations and training feedback loop was very successful with the Junglas and with other units as well. The ODA in Honduras is attempting to establish a similar paradigm as well.

Recommendation 5: Establish OSTs and integrate them into SF-Police partner programs to train and advise the police in how to plan and execute missions, how to tie those missions into training, and how to build campaign plans that ensure missions build off one another.

### Conclusion

In Bolivia, Colombia, and Honduras, US SF built national police capacity to varying degrees with varying success. The degree of success of each program depended most on the duration of the program and the partner nation support for the program. Longer partnerships appear to result in improved outcomes. Partner nation support to counter TOC impacts the unit's support and initiative in accomplishing its mission. Based on the security threat presented by TOC, and its designation by the US as a national security threat, the US should consider replicating programs in which US SF support INL and DEA units with persistent partnership. The US should build a global SOF network based on units that have the correct authorities. Recommendations one, two, and three support this concept. The initial design and development of the program has long-term implications on the cost and outcome of the program. Smaller and simpler is better. Finally, as US SF continues to build partner capacity, the OST-training team feedback loop concept provides an effective means of improving mission and training capabilities.

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